No. 125

Antipædobaptiſm Examined:

OR,

A STRICT AND IMPARTIAL

INQUIRY

INTO THE

NATURE AND DESIGN, SUBJECTS AND MODE

OF

BAPTISM.

INCLUDING, ALSO,

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE NATURE OF

POSITIVE INSTITUTIONS

IN GENERAL, AND

OCCASIONAL STRICTURES ON HUMAN

CEREMONIES IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

CONTAINING, IN PARTICULAR,

A FULL REPLY TO

Mr. BOOTH's Pædobaptiſm Examined.

BY EDWARD WILLIAMS.

WHEN I HAD WAITED—I SAID, I WILL ANSWER ALSO MY PART, I ALSO WILL SHEW MINE OPINION. ELIHU.

VOL. I.

SHREWSBURY:

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MDCCLXXXIX.

PREFACE.

THE following work is not intended *merely* as an anſwer to Mr. BOOTH's *Pædobaptiſm Examined*; the author, as occaſion offered, has taken notice of what appeared to him the moſt plauſible arguments and objections contained in Dr. STENNETT's Anſwer to Dr. ADDINGTON, Dr. GALE's Reflections on Dr. WALL's Hiſtory, and ſome others; and therefore, he has ventured to give the reſult of his inquiries the title of *Antipædobaptiſm Examined*; not ſo much as a counter-title to that of Mr. BOOTH's publication, as that the *Antipædobaptiſt Syſtem* at large, is made the ſubject of inquiry. This extent of deſign will, in ſome meaſure, account for the largeneſs of the work; to which I muſt add another reaſon, viz. That I was deſirous my principles may be thoroughly underſtood by every reader, if poſſible, without hazard of miſtake; and this appeared the moſt effectual method—to ſet them in different poſitions—and to ſhew their connection with the ſeveral branches of diſpute, and their genuine practical tendency. Whence ariſes, eventually,

a double advantage to the inquiſitive reader; he not only muſt needs perceive clearly what the principles are, but alſo has an opportunity to judge of their *truth*, by obſerving the univerſality of their application.

At different intervals of relaxation from more important engagements, the ſubject of theſe volumes had attracted the Author's attention for ſome years; but he did not reſolve to write and publiſh, till ſome time after Mr. Booth's *Pædobaptiſm Examined* made its appearance: nor was it his deſign, when he began to write, to handle the ſeveral branches of controverſy in ſo extenſive a manner. But, in his progreſs, the more he conſidered his leading ideas, in their various application to the different parts, the more he was induced to extend his plan.

When I read Mr. Booth's Preface to the *ſecond edition* of his work, which came out after the former part of mine was ſent into the preſs, my curioſity was not a little gratified with the following paragraph: "Should this examination of Pœdobaptiſm have the honour of being regarded as deſerving an anſwer, and ſhould any of our oppoſers write againſt me, it will not avail to refute ſome particular parts of the work, detached from the general principles

ples on which I proceed. No; the *data*, the *principal grounds* of reaſoning, which are adopted from Pœdobaptiſts themſelves, muſt be conſtantly kept in view; or nothing to the honour of infant ſprinkling will be effected. For as the grand principles on which my argumentation proceeds, and whence my general concluſions are drawn, are thoſe of Proteſtants when contending with Papiſts, and thoſe of Non-conformiſts when diſputing with Engliſh Epiſcopalians; it will be incumbent on ſuch oppoſer to ſhew, either that the *principles themſelves are falſe*, or that my *reaſoning upon them is inconcluſive*. Now as I do not perceive how any Proteſtant can give up thoſe principles, without virtually admitting the ſuperſtitions of Popery; nor how they can be deſerted by any Diſſenter, without implicitly renouncing his Non-conformity; ſo I conclude, that the whole force of any opponent muſt be employed in endeavouring to prove, that I have reaſoned inconſequentially from thoſe principles. That this might be eaſily proved, I am not at preſent convinced: and whether any of our Pœdobaptiſt Brethren will conſider this publication as of ſufficient importance to excite ſuch an attempt, is to me uncertain*."

The

* p. 19, 20.

The data, the principal grounds of reaſoning muſt be kept in view. Well, I reflected, here is my taſk fairly pointed out; and I am not a little pleaſed to obſerve, that what is here preſcribed is preciſely the ſame as what I had from the firſt impoſed upon myſelf: that is, not to nibble at ſome of the branches of his ſtately tree, but to lay the axe of oppoſite principles to the root of it; not to uncover a little here and there of his building, to find a few faults in quotations, tranſlations, and the like, but to undermine the foundation. The *principal grounds* of reaſoning I have endeavoured conſtantly to keep in view; and my aim is throughout to ſhew that the *principles* of Proteſtants and Nonconformiſts, taken in their only true ſenſe and force, are either miſunderſtood or *miſrepreſented* by my opponent, and conſequently his reaſoning upon them, which derives all its plauſibility from that miſrepreſentation, is *inconcluſive*. His conduct in applying their maxims to his cauſe, may be compared to that of a Judge who ſhould produce, from the beſt writers, definitions of Juſtice in the abſtract, and then arbitrarily tack theſe to any cauſe, right or wrong, according to his humour. But will ſuch an arbitrary application of a definition, formed abſtractedly,

ſtractedly, make a cauſe more or leſs juſt in itſelf? Should not the circumſtances of the point in litigation be firſt attended to, and the facts be accurately aſcertained, in order to infer the *quantum* of juſtice or injuſtice in the whole aggregate? So far were the moſt eminent of the Proteſtants and Non-conformiſts from diſcarding the uſe of right reaſon and ſcripture analogy in their inveſtigations of goſpel worſhip and inſtitutions, that ſometimes they were not a little offended with inſinuations to the contrary. The following words of Dr. JOHN OWEN may be fairly deemed a proper ſpecimen of their thoughts upon the matter: "I have of late been much ſurpriſed with the plea of ſome for the *uſe of reaſon* in religion and ſacred things; not at all that ſuch a *plea is inſiſted* on, but that it is by them built expreſsly on a ſuppoſition, that it is by others, whom they reflect upon, *denied*; whereas ſome, probably intended in thoſe reflections, have pleaded for it *againſt the Papiſts* (to ſpeak within the bounds of ſobriety) with as much reaſon, and no leſs effectually, than any amongſt themſelves*."

IN fact, the chriſtian church has been ſhamefully abuſed by extravagant opinions and ſuperſtitious

* On the Sabbath, Exercit. I. § 8.

ſtitious ceremonies, which may well raiſe the indignation of a mind in love with the ſacred authority of ſcripture, and rational devotion; and this has occaſioned ſome, in the height of their antipathy and pious zeal, to fly into the oppoſite extreme of adhering to the *mere letter* of divine laws, to the neglect of their *true ſpirit*. But this is not all; what was deſigned as a preventive to the former diſeaſe, becomes itſelf, in common with it, the occaſion (or, ſhall I ſay, the culpable cauſe?) of a malady far more dangerous. "Among other prejudices,"—ſays a ſhrewd obſerver, who, hiding himſelf behind the ſcene, attentively watched their motions—"among other prejudices there is one of a particular nature, which you muſt have obſerved to be one of the greateſt cauſes of modern irreligion.—Whilſt ſome *opinions and rites* are carried to ſuch an *immoderate height*, as expoſes the abſurdity of them to the view of almoſt every body but them who raiſe them, not only gentlemen of the *belles lettres*, but even men of common ſenſe, many times ſee thro' them; and then out of indignation and an exceſſive renitence, not *ſeparating* that which is true from that which is falſe, they come to deny both, and fall back into the contrary extreme, a contempt of all religion in general *."

* WOLLAST. Relig. of Nat. p. 60, 61. Edit. 1725.

I SHOULD be very ſorry if what is advanced in the following Examination, ſhould in any meaſure violate the ſacred bond of chriſtian charity and friendſhip that ſubſiſts between me and, in this inſtance, my differing brethren; with ſeveral of whom I wiſh to preſerve and cultivate a fraternal affection. And thoſe of them who bear the miniſterial character, with whom I agree in weightier points of evangelical truth, are welcome to my pulpit, my houſe, and my heart; and none would be more ſo, according to my preſent views, than the author of the *Reign of Grace*, and *Pædobaptiſm Examined*.

I NOW ſubmit the performance to the impartial judgment of the candid public, and implore the bleſſing of God on every grain of truth contained in it, for the reader's real benefit; earnaſtly wiſhing that evangelical knowledge may increaſe, and that all our acquaintance with God's word, covenant, inſtitutions, and all the means of grace, may be reduced to experience and uſeful practice, to the glory of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt. *Amen.*

OSWESTRY, Dec. 9, 1788.

ERRATA.

Vol. I. p.	7	line 1. Note,	for Treatiſe on,	read, Hiſtory of.
	89	10	(§)	(§ 4.)
	95	29	negatives	negative
	137	26	Rom.	1 Cor.
	184	4	Corrollary	corollary
	198	ult.	corolaries	corollaries
	200	23	ſhall	ſhould
	217	8	promiſor	promiſer
	224	12	fants	infants
	283	17	were	where
	—	ult.	Grotius	Grotium.
	286	15	*dele* as	
	298	2 Note,	*ſtate*	happineſs
	311	11	31	39
	356	33	παΐζαι	παῖραι
	386	penult.	their	your
	395	penult.	dele *bad*	
Vol. II. p.	3	17	catechreſis	catachreſis
	63	18	tincturat	tinctura
	120	13	let	led
	199	1	caſe	cauſe
	210	25	παιδιαι	παιδιων
	211	12	fail	feal
	213	4	dele *as* after *well*	
	—	—	major	magis
	268	28	his word	God's word
	288	4	ſee it	ſee to it.
	382	18 *	Blackſt. Comm. Introd. § 2.	

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VOLUME THE SECOND.

Intended to be publiſhed, as ſoon as the Author's other Engagements will permit,

AN

ESSAY

ON THE

EQUITY OF DIVINE GOVERNMENT,

AND THE

SOVEREIGNTY OF DIVINE GRACE.

Wherein, particularly, The

LATITUDINARIAN HYPOTHESIS OF INDETERMINATE REDEMPTION,

AND THE

ANTINOMIAN NOTION of the DIVINE DECREES being the rule of miniſterial conduct, are carefully examined.

By EDWARD WILLIAMS.

SHALL not the Judge of all the earth do right? Gen. xviii. 25.

AND he doth according to his will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. Dan. iv. 35.

WHY doth he yet find fault? for who hath reſiſted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay unto him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus? Rom. ix. 19, 20.

THE ſecret things belong to the Lord our God; but thoſe things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever. Deut. xxix. 29.

ANTIPÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED.

INTRODUCTION,

Containing ſome Preliminary Remarks.

§ 1. *The importance of the ſubject.* § 2. *The advantages of a ſtrict and impartial inquiry into it.* § 3. *Preliminary Remarks.* § 4. (1) *Of the kind of evidence required in this debate.* § 5. (2) *Concerning the main hinge of the controverſy.* § 6. (3) *Of defining and explaining the principal terms.* § 7. (4) *Of human authority and opinion.*

§ 1. THAT the ſubject inveſtigated in the following pages is of a nature conſiderably important, will hardly be queſtioned by any who reflect, that *no perſon* profeſſing chriſtianity can lawfully exempt himſelf from paying it at leaſt a practical attention; for, if he imagine (as the *Quakers*, and ſome of the followers of SOCINUS do) that he is under no obligation to

eſpouſe the practice of water baptiſm, as a *ſtanding ordinance* in the chriſtian church, ſurely he ought to have ſubſtantial reaſons for that determination, or elſe muſt incur the cenſure of precipitate raſhneſs and irreligion. It concerns him impartially to judge, whether or not the arguments adduced in favour of this chriſtian practice be of *ſuperior force* to thoſe inſiſted on to juſtify an abſolute neglect of it. If the ordinance be from heaven, a law once enacted by the Great Head of the church; is our evidence for its repeal ſtronger than any we have for its continuance? If not, the neglect muſt be highly criminal, as implying an impeachment of the divine wiſdom, and a contempt of the divine authority*. But if it be an evident truth, that this ordinance is of *perpetual obligation*, no ſincere chriſtian can heſitate a moment from inferring, that it is of ſome importance to know, how he may *beſt* diſcharge any duty that relates to it? To ſay, that it is of no conſequence *who* is baptized, or immaterial *how* the rite is to be performed, *without due*

* THE notion, "that this inſtitution doth not extend to the deſcendants of profeſſing chriſtians; being neither ſuitable to their circumſtances, nor intended to bind them," is juſtly ſtiled, by a Gentleman who has lately publiſhed on the ſubject, a *new idea* concerning baptiſm, as appropriate to *preſent times*; which he refutes by ſhewing — that there is nothing in the nature of any particular *command*, or any *circumſtance* in the injunction that renders it peculiarly proper, or any ways limits it to the perſons and times then preſent, or which immediately ſucceeded—and that there is nothing in the rite of baptiſm, in its meaning and *deſign*, that indicates its being founded on *partial* conſiderations. See TOULMIN's *Eſſay on Baptiſm, paſſim.*

due examination, is incompatible with chriſtian ſincerity. Whatever bears the ſtamp of divine authority has an undiſputed claim on our reverential regards. I may further add; the conſideration of its frequent occurrence—that moſt goſpel miniſters have reiterated calls to determine about the ſubjects and circumſtances of it—that there are innumerable families who have repeated occaſions to decide upon the caſe—and, in a word, that no parent of a living child in the whole chriſtian world, ought to reckon this ordinance as a matter of mere indifference—theſe conſiderations, I ſay, and others that might be mentioned, are concurring reaſons at once to juſtify a ſtrict and impartial inquiry into this controverted ſubject, and thereby an attempt to aſcertain its comparative importance.

THUS far, therefore, I have the pleaſure to agree with the reſpectable Author whoſe publication I more profeſſedly examine, when he ſays, "Some perſons affect to repreſent all diſputes about the mode and ſubjects of baptiſm as not only ſtale and unimportant, but as unworthy the character of any who profeſs a warm regard for the Perſon, the atonement, and the grace of Jeſus Chriſt. It muſt, indeed, be acknowledged, that church order, poſitive rites, and external forms of worſhip, are not of *equal* importance with thoſe doctrines which immediately reſpect the object of our worſhip, as rational creatures; the ground of our hope, as criminals deſerving to periſh; or the ſource of our bleſſedneſs, as in-

tended for an immortal exiſtence.—But is this a ſufficient reaſon for treating the law of baptiſm as if it were of little or no importance—as if it were *obſolete*, or as if our Great Legiſlator had *no meaning* when he enacted it?—Are we not required to *contend earneſtly*, but with virtuous diſpoſitions, *for* every branch of *that faith which was once delivered to the ſaints?* If, therefore, infants be ſolemnly ſprinkled by divine right, it muſt be the *indiſpenſible duty* of Pædobaptiſts to contend for it*"—eſpecially when *attacked*. To this I would add, if the baptizing of infants be *at all* a duty, it *muſt* be an *important* one, for it is to be obſerved, as Bp. BUTLER has done before, "That all chriſtians are commanded to contribute, by their profeſſion of chriſtianity, to preſerve it in the world; for it is the very ſcheme of the goſpel that each chriſtian ſhould, in his degree, contribute towards continuing and carrying it on; all by uniting in the publick profeſſion and external practice of chriſtianity†," which cannot properly be done without duly attending to the introductory rite to ſuch a profeſſion.

§ 2. A FAIR inveſtigation of the ſubject before us, in its full extent, and the *general principles* on which the weight of the controverſy depends, may be attended alſo with ſome conſiderable advantages. A liberal, yet modeſt, inquiry after truth, eſpecially in matters of duty and

* Mr. BOOTH's Pædobaptiſm Examined. Preface, p. 7.

† BUTLER's Analogy, Part II, Ch. 1. p. 219. 2d. Edit.

and practice, cannot fail of being immediately advantageous to the inquirer, and, when attended with ſucceſs, muſt be greatly beneficial in its conſequences. For, to diſcover truth, and the *evidence* of truth, muſt needs afford more ſubſtantial profit, and a more generous pleaſure, than can be expected in the mazes of falſehood and error, ignorance and prejudice. We may reſt aſſured that the valuable gem, TRUTH, will loſe nothing of its luſtre or worth by a thorough examination. If what has appeared to us, in the ſemblance of a precious jewel, turn out on a cloſer ſearch to be no better than a worthleſs pebble, it muſt be weak and prepoſterous ſtill to retain and prize it as moſt valuable. But if long eſteemed as of real worth, and pronounced genuine by many able judges, proportionable caution is neceſſary; we ſhould turn and view it on every ſide, avail ourſelves of the beſt light, and every proper advantage, leſt, gulled by the artful, ourſelves and our families ſuſtain an important loſs. If Pædobaptiſm be in reality what its oppoſers of the preſent day pronounce it to be, namely, "*abſurd* and *unſcriptural**," to reſign it will be no loſs, but real gain. But if it be of God, it is a *truth*; and if it be a truth, there is *attainable evidence* for its being ſo; for, I confeſs, I have no high opinion of what Mr. B. calls a wonderful ſecret—*truth without evidence*—tho' it were diſcovered by a right reverend

* STENNET's Anſwer to ADDINGTON, p. 234.

verend prelate †. But I would not have Mr. B. be tranſported with joy at the idea of his poſſeſſing "greatly preponderating evidence on his ſide," till he has better juſtified the *principles* on which he argues; leſt while he is endeavouring to demoliſh the labours of others, and pleaſed, "greatly

† Bp. TAYLOR's Liberty of Propheſying. This prelate, whom Mr. B. ſo often quotes, wrote the treatiſe here referred to in the times of the rebellion in England; in which he undertakes to ſhew, with a view to moderate the rigor of the parliamentarian party, *how much* might be ſaid of two ſorts of Diſſenters, the Antipædobaptiſts and the Papiſts.—And in his plea for the former, tho' he there declares himſelf well ſatisfied with the principles of Pædobaptiſm, of which he gives a ſummary account, and ſays, that he takes the other opinion to be an *error*; yet under pretence of reciting what may be ſaid for this error, he draws up ſo elaborate a ſyſtem of arguments againſt infant baptiſm, and ſets them forth to ſuch advantage, that he is judged to have ſaid more for the Antipædobaptiſts than they were ever before able to ſay for themſelves. And Dr. HAMMOND ſays (Six Queries, Infant Baptiſm, § 49.) It is the moſt diligent collection and the moſt exact ſcheme of the arguments againſt Infant Baptiſm that he had ever met with. Therefore the Dr. wrote an anſwer to this piece, ſolving each objection particularly; towards the concluſion of which (§ 139.) he obſerves, "I have "paſſed thro' all the ſeveral heads of arguments that are here propoſed, "and conſidered them as nicely as I could, ſo as not to let fall one "word that ſeemed to me to have any ſhew of validity in it, or in "the conſequence of it, and muſt conſent to the truth of the author's "[the Biſhop's] obſervations, "that the Anabaptiſts have been en-"couraged in their error more by the accidental advantages given them "by the weakneſs of thoſe arguments that have been brought againſt "them, than by any truth of their cauſe." And afterwards Bp. TAYLOR himſelf, having premiſed that he was ſorry if any one had been ſo weak as to be miſled by ſuch objections, and that he counted it great condeſcenſion in Dr. HAMMOND to beſtow an anſwer on them, wrote alſo his own anſwers to his own objections, and inſerted them in a latter edition of the ſaid treatiſe, (See WALL's Treatiſe

" greatly pleaſed," with the thought, his own foundation be undermined. Nor would I have him be ſo " greatly diſcouraged," as he profeſſes to be, in reſpect of an iſſue to the preſent controverſy, while he thinks that the Baptiſts *alone* " will plead preponderating evidence, and firmly inſiſt upon it as a maxim of logical prudence, that our *aſſent* ſhould always be proportioned to the *degree of evidence.*" Sir, let not this diſcourage you; ſurely the Pædobaptiſts will think better of it than to reject ſo excellent a rule in pleading their cauſe. For my own part, I have the pleaſure to aſſure you, that I feel no reluctance at all to appeal, on every occaſion, to ſo equitable a maxim, be the conſequence what it may. " Nor have I any apprehenſion (to borrow the words of an oppoſite writer) that this trial will at all injure the cauſe I am defending; on the contrary, I am well perſuaded

Treatiſe on Infant Baptiſm, Part II. Chap. 2. § 6.)—After all, tho' there be nothing which we can pronounce to be truth without ſuitable evidence, yet in a qualified ſenſe I queſtion whether the Biſhop's remark—" I think there is ſo much to be pretended againſt that [Pædobaptiſm] which I believe to be the truth, that there is much more *truth* than *evidence* on our ſide"—deſerves all that ſeverity of ſatire which Mr. B. beſtows on it. For by *evidence*, I preſume, he intends a particular *kind* of evidence, an *expreſs* command, *totidem verbis*, or, demonſtrable ſcriptural example: and by *truth*, a concluſion fairly drawn from *other* premiſes. Nor will Mr. B. deny, that there are many things of a religious nature demonſtrably *true*, or in matters of practice abſolute *duty*, the *evidence* whereof does not ariſe from expreſs revelation. Whether this remark will apply to the ſubject in queſtion, will be further examined.

it will ſerve it. It is the part of error, not of truth, to elude inquiry: and he who would eſtabliſh a point in debate, if he is ſatisfied of the goodneſs of his cauſe, will know how even to avail himſelf of the objections of his opponents. Truth is always perfectly conſiſtent with itſelf: and however collateral circumſtances may be ſo diſguiſed, or placed in ſuch a point of light by ſkilful management, as, for a time, to weaken and confound the plaineſt evidence of a real fact; yet, when thoſe circumſtances come to be thoroughly looked into, they will not only ceaſe to have their effect, but will corroborate and brighten that evidence to which they before proved ſo unfriendly.*"

§ 3. IT is no uncommon thing in controverſial matters for the contending parties to miſunderſtand one another on their firſt ſetting out; either ſome ambiguous terms are not explained, on which, notwithſtanding, conſiderable ſtreſs is laid; or ſomething is much inſiſted on which has only a remote reference, but is far from being eſſential, to the ſubject in hand; or a multitude of arguments are produced in proof of a point, when moſt, if not all, would have not the leaſt plauſibility but from begging the queſtion in debate. This method may, indeed, dazzle and confound the weak, but is ill calculated to convince the judicious. This being the caſe, and perhaps never more ſo than in diſputes about baptiſm,

* STENNET's Anſwer to A. p. 213.

baptiſm, it may be proper to make a few *Preliminary Remarks.*

§ 4. (1) I BEGIN then, with a pertinent obſervation of an ingenious Antipædobaptiſt, which he afterwards expreſsly applies to baptiſm. "No theological ſubject (ſays he) requires more accurate inveſtigation than the article of *evidence.* Evidence is that which *demonſtrates.* Now there are various kinds and degrees of evidence, and it would very much contribute to clear a point in debate, were diſputants firſt of all to agree on certain data, or *what* ſhould be allowed evidence in the caſe in queſtion. In law this is a matter of great conſequence, and when divines proceed in the methods uſed in our courts of law, they gain infinite advantage—They do, as it were, ſwear the witneſſes before they admit them as evidence*."

IT is ſtrongly inſinuated by Mr. B. that whatever has been ſaid in vindication of Pædobaptiſm is fit only to deceive "ſuperficial obſervers." Take his own words. "It is manifeſt that nothwithſtanding the number of evidences uſually ſubpœnaed againſt us, when the validity of infant ſprinkling is to be *publickly* tried; and notwithſtanding the formidable appearance they frequently make, in the eye of a ſuperficial obſerver; yet, when theſe very evidences are impartially examined by Pædobaptiſts in *private*, without being perplexed with captious queries, they have not *a word* to ſay for infant ſprinkling; but all

* ROBINSON's Notes on CLAUDE's Eſſay, Vol. II. p. 247.

their depoſitions are directed to prove doctrines and facts of a quite different nature †." Surely this is very aſtoniſhing if true. What! are *all* the concluſions of *every* Pædobaptiſt diſputant ſo naked, ſo arbitrary, ſo irrational, that not *one principle* is found which, as a faithful evidence, and unſuborned, will ſtand uniform in its depoſitions, unmoved, and unawed by croſs-examination? I would now only beg of the reader to admit, that it is at leaſt *poſſible* Mr. B. is miſled by too haſty and partial a judgment. Is he ſure, has he *demonſtrated*, not only that the witneſſes give evidence in his favour, but that, in Mr. ROBINSON's phraſe, they are "ſworn before they are admitted?" I am not a little ſuſpicious that his *principal* witneſs, nay the *only* one in which he ſeems to place any confidence, is not *legally* introduced.

To be a little more explicit; I apprehend the Antipædobaptiſts build on the following *ſuppoſition* as their chief corner ſtone, confide in it as their great palladium, and refer to it as the ſtandard of all their arguments, namely, "That the law of baptiſm in the New Teſtament is of a nature *intirely poſitive*, as to the ſubject and mode of it;" and, if I underſtand them right, they are willing that their cauſe ſhould ſtand or fall with it. Thus Mr. B. when animadverting on the conduct of one of his brethren for occaſionally quitting that ſort, "Except it be maintained, that *poſitive* ordinances are to be *intirely*

† Idem P. 449.

intirely governed by *poſitive law* and primitive example, it is *impoſſible* for him to ſtand his ground by *fair argument* in various caſes, when diſputing with Pædobaptiſts as ſuch *." " All who pretend, (ſays a Gentleman before quoted) to defend infant ſprinkling, do but trifle, except they go to the *true ground* of the debate, and either prove —that infant ſprinkling is ſomewhere appointed by Chriſt our Legiſlator—or that the authority of Chriſt is not neceſſary to the eſtabliſhment of a *poſitive inſtitute*—or that ſome perſon has ſince appeared veſted with ſuch authority as Chriſt himſelf exerciſed †." A dire dilemma! But, upon recollection, to eaſe myſelf a little of this tripple perplexity, I beg leave to return the *third* part of the difficulty to the author himſelf and the pretended ſucceſſors of St. Peter, to be amicably ſettled between them. The two former I ſhall not *trifle* with, but ſhall endeavour fairly to anſwer them. For as our opponents ſeem willing to hazard the reputation and exiſtence of their cauſe with the ſtrength of the aforeſaid maxim, " Baptiſm is a merely poſitive rite;"—and concluding it to be *divine*, they in their turn, " in the language of ſelf-gratulation, repeat the old εὕρηκα of ARCHIMEDES, *I have found it! I have found it!*"—it will be neceſſary, and it ſhall be the leading part of this work, to examine its pretenſions with ſtrictneſs. Thus I, alſo, ſhall attempt, on proper occaſions, to aſcertain the *kinds* and *degrees* of evidence, and

* p. 462. † ROBINSON's Notes, Vol. II. p. 423.

"I swear the witneſſes." Nor am I diſcouraged at the proſpect of "proving, that infant baptiſm IS SOMEWHERE *appointed* by Chriſt our Legiſlator."

§ 5. (2) I PROCEED to obſerve, that it appears to me extremely deſirable, in controverſial debates, that the diſputants ſhould be peculiarly ſolicitous to fix upon the *main hinge* of the difference between them, as that not only tends to reduce it in bulk, but would alſo ſuperſede much impertinence, altercation, and falſe reaſoning; hereby a fairer opportunity would be afforded for a cloſe encounter, the combatants would ſtand, as it were, upon even ground, and thus we may hope the one party might avoid the charge laid againſt it by the other, *viz.* That it no ſooner fixes upon a ſpot for the engagement, than it finds it neceſſary or expedient to quit that for another.

BUT how ſhall a man know what this turning point is? Mr. ROBINSON aſſures us that "Abraham's covenant, greek particles, and a thouſand more ſuch topicks, no more regard the ſubject than the firſt verſe of the firſt book of Chronicles, Adam, Sheth, Enoſh *!" Dreadful ſcythe! And no mean mower, to cut ſo much at one ſtroke! ——Dr. S. with more moderation, expreſſes himſelf as follows, "This queſtion, ſays he,—WHETHER BAPTISM IS A MEAN OF FAITH AND REPENTANCE?—I take to be the *main hinge* upon which the diſpute between us and the Pædobaptiſts

* Notes on CLAUDE, Vol. II. p. 423.

dobaptiſts turns †." I am at a loſs, however, how to reconcile this declaration with what he ſays elſewhere; for inſtance, where he repreſents the ſuppoſed "JOINT INTEREST OF PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN IN THE COVENANT, as that upon which the *whole ſuperſtructure* of infant baptiſm ſtands," adding, "What pity then our brethren will not yield to the force of this plain truth, that poſitive inſtitutions muſt in their own nature derive their authority, not from the uncertain deductions of analogy, but, from the clear and expreſs declarations of God's word!" And what would follow? Why, "yielding to this propoſition, they would at once find themſelves obliged to lay aſide infant baptiſm *." Certainly then, the ſaid propoſition muſt be no mean hinge, if not the main one. But has the Dr. or any one elſe, fairly proved not only that the propoſition itſelf is true, but alſo *applicable* to the ordinance of baptiſm, and conſequently that this "Yielding" is our *duty*. Ah, *hic labor, hoc opus eſt*, this, this is the main *difficulty*. What a pity the Pædobaptiſts ſhould be ſo importuned to yield *without evidence!*—I alſo will ſhew mine opinion reſpecting the queſtion to be decided, and it is this, WHETHER IT IS THE WILL OF CHRIST THAT THE INFANTS OF BELIEVING PARENTS SHOULD BE BAPTIZED? It certainly is his will that all who are proper ſubjects of baptiſm ſhould be baptized; we contend that the infants of believing parents are ſuch; and therefore ſhould be

† Anſwer to A. p. 34. * Idem p. 174.

be baptized. If they are proved to be *proper* ſubjects, that is, ſuch as come within Chriſt's *intention* when he inſtituted the ordinance, it muſt follow that it is HIS WILL and pleaſure they ſhould be baptized.—I ſay the infants of *believing* parents, for it is not eſſential to the controverſy to include any others; what may be ſaid of *others* is only a circumſtance which does not affect the argument. For the Antipædobaptiſts' arguments are intended to conclude againſt *all children* alike, and it muſt be as concluſive againſt their ſyſtem to prove it to be the *will of Chriſt* that any *one* infant whatever ſhould be baptized, as if *all* were included in the reaſoning.

HENCE another queſtion ariſes, namely, How MAY WE KNOW WHAT IS THE WILL OF CHRIST IN THIS MATTER? Mr. B. replies; "Seeing baptiſm is as really and intirely a poſitive inſtitution, as any that were given to the choſen tribes; we cannot with ſafety infer either the mode or the ſubject of it, from any thing ſhort of a *precept*, or a *precedent*, recorded in ſcripture, and relating to that very ordinance ‖." He frequently expreſſes himſelf to the ſame purpoſe, as do all the writers of note on that ſide of the queſtion. We ſee that Mr. B. intends that this declaration ſhould be applied not only to the mode but alſo to the *ſubject* of baptiſm, that is, in other words, to this queſtion, "WHO is to be baptized?" Now, independent of the *fact*, that the

‖ p. 13.

the right of infants is or is not ſupported by a revealed expreſs precept or precedent, nay, on *ſuppoſition* that there is in ſcripture *neither*, I maintain that the infants of believers are intitled to the ordinance, and of courſe that the rule he works by is a falſe one. It proves too much, and is reducible, on his own principles, to a downright contradiction. This aſſertion I hope to make good againſt our author in the following pages, notwithſtanding what he ſays about "poſitive laws implying their negatives †."

WHAT our oppoſing friends ſay about *poſitive rites*, *precepts*, *precedents*, "and a thouſand more ſuch topicks," are to no good purpoſe, until they demonſtrate that the faithful dictates of the law of our nature, of right reaſon and common ſenſe, are no part of CHRIST'S WILL to his people and miniſters, when theſe dictates are not *expreſsly* controuled and ſuppreſſed.

IT is not a little ſurpriſing to obſerve how ſtrenuouſly they oppoſe moral and analogical reaſonings on this *one ſubject* of baptiſm, while they juſtly aſſume the ſame liberty with us on other ſubjects *equally poſitive*. I do not wiſh to ſee any, whom Chriſt has made free, wear the galling yoke of thoſe ceremonies which he did not *intend* ſhould continue, tho' *commanded* by himſelf, and *practiſed* by his primitive diſciples. Therefore, this liberty, I ſay, they *juſtly* take in all New Teſtament inſtitutions, this of baptiſm *alone* excepted; and this liberty we aſſert is the right

† p. 187.

right of us *all*, and without exception of *any* inſtitution. The Antipædobaptiſts are guilty of a great piece of *inconſiſtence* in making ſuch a diſtinction where there is no apparent ground of difference, and ſo in pronouncing judgment without ſuitable *evidence*; but we conſiſtently claim a right of appealing to reaſon, analogy, and common ſenſe, in connexion with the *nature* and *deſign* of the inſtitution, and the moſt apparent *intention* of our Lawgiver. Nor is it in their power to maintain the *perpetuity* of this ordinance, againſt the Quakers and others, the obligation of miniſters to baptize thoſe who are *taught*, &c. but by thoſe very aids which they would fain deny us.

§ 6. (3) INAUSPICIOUS to this controverſy, above moſt others, *terms* of ambiguous import, and unexplained, have been bandied about by both parties, on which, however, conſiderable ſtreſs has been laid; and thus, much confuſion and little profit have often attended very laboured arguments. For inſtance, the term INFANT SPRINKLING has been ſubſtituted for *infant baptiſm*, not indeed always by way of contempt, but often improperly, becauſe thereby is conveyed the ſecondary idea of a neceſſary connexion between the mode *ſprinkling* and the baptiſm of an infant. Whereas thouſands are *dipped* in infancy as well as ſprinkled, in the chriſtian world, and ſome even in England. So that, upon our opponents' own principles, thoſe infants who are

are dipped in the name of the Sacred Three, by a Miniſter of Chriſt, in obedience to HIS WILL, ought to be reckoned as BAPTIZED: for ſince they maintain that baptizing and dipping are ſynonymous terms, it follows that thoſe are baptized who are thus dipped. Not to inſiſt upon the abſurd conſequence of ſubſtituting the one term for the other; for then it would alſo follow, that there are *many baptiſms* to which the *ſame perſon* ought often to ſubmit for his health's ſake; that as often as a child is dipped it is baptized; that as often as any perſon in the world, Chriſtian, Jew, Turk, or Heathen, is plunged, on any occaſion whatever, he is baptized; yea, that as often as *any thing* is plunged, according to them, it is baptized; whereas I know of no Pædobaptiſts who wiſh to make ſprinkling, or indeed any other *particular mode* of uſing water, ſynonymous with baptiſm.

BESIDES, the queſtion is not, whether ſcripture expreſsly enjoins *infant baptiſm*, by a direct ſpecification, but whether it enjoins *baptiſm* to all *proper* ſubjects, and whether the adminiſtrator, who has a diſcretionary right of judging about qualifications, has ſufficient reaſons to conclude, or ſuch evidence as the nature of the caſe requires, that infants are ſuch as are included within our Lord's *intention*, when he inſtituted the ordinance. If infants poſſeſs, as I am perſuaded they do, the eſſential qualifications of proper ſubjects, then it was not only needleſs

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but would have been *impertinent* to ſpecify them. When therefore I ſpeak of the mode, it is on ſuppoſition of agreement about the ſubject; and when I ſpeak of the ſubject, it is on ſuppoſition of agreement about the mode.

THE remark already made on the abuſe of terms, is notoriouſly exemplified in the word COVENANT, without adding any more inſtances. It muſt be acknowledged that many Pædobaptiſt writers have been extremely unguarded in this particular, which has afforded no ſmall handle to the oppoſite party. But our opponents are not free of blame on this head, and I am not a little ſurpriſed to find a perſon of Dr. S.'s circumſpection and polemical acumen prolong an argument to above thirty pages, which has no force at all but in proportion as the word *covenant* is taken in a ſenſe which, I am perſuaded, moſt Pædobaptiſts reject. And this conduct is the leſs excuſeable in this ingenious and worthy writer, becauſe he profeſſedly "lays down all the *poſſible ſenſes* in which perſons may be ſaid to be in a covenant *." The Doctor, ſurely, need but to be *reminded* of this matter, for his own ſagacity muſt have *informed* him how inconcluſive his reaſoning is, had he taken all the *poſſible* ſenſes of being in a covenant.

§ 7. (4) THE numerous *quotations* in Mr. B.'s *Pædobaptiſm Examined* make, indeed, a formidable

* Anſwer to A. Letter II. and III.

midable appearance, and the rather becauſe there are among them, as he juſtly obſerves, "ſome of the moſt eminent Pædobaptiſts that ever filled the profeſſor's chair, or that ever adorned the proteſtant pulpit." But my judgment intirely fails me if a *very great number* of theſe quotations are not perfectly *conſiſtent* with the practice of the perſons quoted, and therefore improperly introduced as evidences againſt themſelves.

But ſuppoſing that all the paſſages our author employs were directly in his favour, and unexceptionably tranſcribed or tranſlated; nay, were they an hundred times more numerous and large, and ſtill more favourable to the cauſe for which he pleads, it is evident from his own declaration, that he ought not to conſider "either the number or weight of ſuch quotations, as conſtituting *any part* of the ground on which the diſtinguiſhing conduct of the party proceeds," or on which the cauſe depends. That many great and learned men have entertained different and even contradictory ſentiments on the ſubject, does not affect it. That one ſhould give up a topick in the debate, which another thought valid, is immaterial. It is of little conſequence, in point of argument in the preſent caſe, to urge what is the *opinion* of good and wiſe men upon the matter; whereas it is of eſſential importance to inquire whether what is pleaded for be defenſible or indefenſible. *Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato; ſed major amica* Veritas. It is certainly very

very becoming, that the ſentiments and teſtimonies of reſpectable authors ſhould be treated with modeſty and decorum, but I muſt beg leave to diſcard all human *authority*, or human *opinion*, ſingly or collectively taken, from bearing any part of the *principal* evidence; for I would appeal to the *caſe itſelf*, and not to the number or manner of its defenders or oppoſers.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Of the nature and obligation of positive laws and institutions in general, together with the use of inferential and analogical reasoning, with relation to the ordinance of baptism.

§ 1. *Of law in general.* § 2. *Positive laws and institutions defined and explained.* § 3. *Positive precepts distinguished from moral ones.* § 4. *Their comparative obligations.* § 5. *The importance of positive institutions.* § 6. *They are necessarily of an external nature.* § 7. *They presuppose the dictates of reason and revelation.* § 8. *All the institutions of christianity are of a mixed nature.* § 9. *As appears* (1) *from the false principle on which the contrary opinion is founded.* § 10. (2) *From the concessions of opponents, as to the nature of positive institutions.* § 11—14. (3) *From incontestible facts.* § 15. *How to determine what is positive and what is moral in a mixed law.* § 16. *The importance of analogical reasoning.* § 17, 18. *To deny the use of it in our inquiries about baptism, leads to absurd consequences.* (1) *Without it, we can know nothing about the ordinance.* § 19—22. (2) *Our opponents cannot prove their authority to administer, and the validity*

validity of the action. § 23—26. (3) *Nor to determine who is a proper subject.* § 27. (4) *Other ridiculous consequences.* § 28, 29. (5) *Transubstantiation retorted.* § 30. *Extremes of different kinds.* § 31—34. *Objections answered.* § 35. *Recapitulation.*

§ 1. LAW, in its most general and comprehensive import, signifies a *rule of action*, dictated by some superior. And man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the Laws of his Creator, as to disposition and conduct; and is bound, from the very idea of his absolute dependence, to regulate his actions and behaviour according to the intimations of his sovereign pleasure.—The WILL OF GOD is the grand law of our nature. But this will is discoverable principally two ways; either by *human sagacity*—including that intuitive perception whereby we discern what is most conducive to our own welfare, which welfare the will of our Maker ever supposes, and the exertions of right reason—or by *direct revelation.* "If our reason (says an eminent writer) were always as in our first ancestor before his transgression, clear and perfect, unruffled by passions, unclouded by prejudice, unimpaired by disease and intemperance, the task of discovering what the *law of nature* directs in every circumstance of life would be pleasant and easy; we should need no other guide but this. But every man now finds the contrary in his own experience; that his reason

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is corrupt, and his understanding full of ignorance and error. This has given manifold occasion for the benign interposition of divine providence; which, in compassion to the frailty, the imperfection, and the blindness of human reason, hath been pleased, at sundry times and in divers manners, to discover and enforce its laws by an immediate and direct revelation. The doctrines thus delivered, we call the revealed or divine law, and they are to be found only in the holy scriptures. These precepts when revealed, are found upon comparison to be really a part of the original law of nature, as they tend in their consequences to man's felicity *."

It is to be carefully noticed, that revelation, as referring to human actions, performs a double part; it either renders more authentick and indubitable, what human sagacity perceived as probable, or else enjoins duties which mere reason could never have discovered. Hence arises the obvious distinction of moral and positive laws.

§ 2. By *positive laws* I understand, such laws as do not appear to us obligatory, except upon the *mere authority* † of the Divine Legislator. And for

* Blackstone's Commentaries, Vol. I. Introd. § 2.

† When I say that the obligation of positive laws rests upon the *mere authority* of the Legislator, let the reader observe, that this is not to be confounded with an *arbitrary disposition* in the Deity. This distinction is well described by an elegant and philosophic pen: "When some speak of the *Will of God* as the "*Rule of Duty*, they do not certainly mean a blind arbitrary "principle of action, but such a principle as is *directed* by reason,

this *authority* is sufficiently and absolutely binding from the consideration of our being previously assured of the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, who enacts the law. *Positive institutions*, strictly taken, are a species of positive laws, and differ as a *law* differs from an *institution*. The former *may* be transient, but the latter is, at least for a term, of standing obligation. The command given Abraham to sacrifice his son, was a positive *law*, but not properly speaking an institution; and the right of circumcision was a positive *institution* as well as a law. Jesus commanding Peter to walk on the water, was a transient law, but his command to go and baptize proper subjects of all nations, is a permanent institution. " And altho' no laws but positive be mutable, yet all are not mutable which be positive. Positive laws are either permanent or else changeable, according

" son, and *governed* by wisdom, or a regard to certain ends in *preference* " to others. Unless we suppose some principle in the Deity analogous " to our sense of obligation, some antecedent affection, or determi- " nation of his nature, to prefer some ends before others, we " cannot assign any sufficient, or indeed any possible reason, why he " should will one thing more than another, or have any election " at all. Whatever therefore is the *ground* of his *choice* or will " must be the *ground* of obligation, and not the choice or will " itself.—That this is so, appears farther from the common dis- " tinction which divines and philosophers make between *moral* " and *positive* commands and duties. The *former* they think *obli-* " *gatory*, antecedent to will, or at least to any declaration of it; " the *latter* obligatory only in consequence of a positive appoint- " ment of the divine will. But what foundation can there be for " this distinction, if all duty and obligation be equally the result " of *mere will?*" FORDYCE's Elements of Moral Philosophy, B. I. Sect. 3.

cording as the *matter itſelf* is, concerning which they were firſt made †."

§ 3. IT is evident, upon the leaſt reflection, that poſitive laws are no further binding than the authority by which they are enjoined is *diſcernible*. And it is equally evident, that there is no poſſible method of diſcerning the Lawgiver's authority and will, relative to theſe laws, but by his own expreſs declarations; for if they are diſcernible any other way, they are no longer poſitive. The *difference*, therefore, between poſitive and moral commands is clear and obvious. "Moral precepts, (as Biſhop BUTLER well obſerves) are precepts the reaſons of which we ſee: poſitive precepts, are precepts, the reaſons of which we do not ſee." But I would further obſerve, with the ſame ſagacious author, that "this is the diſtinction between moral and poſitive precepts, conſidered reſpectively *as ſuch*.—Moral and poſitive precepts are in ſome reſpects alike, in other reſpects different. So far as they are alike, we diſcern the reaſons of both: ſo far as they are different, we diſcern the reaſons of the former, but not of the latter. And, moral duties ariſe out of the nature of the caſe itſelf, prior to external command: poſitive duties do not ariſe out of the nature of the caſe, but from external command: nor would they be duties at all, were it not for ſuch command, received from him whoſe creatures and ſubjects we are.—Care, then, is to be taken, when a

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† HOOKER's Eccles. Polit. B. I. § 15.

comparison is made between positive and moral duties, that they be compared no farther than they are different: no farther than as the former are positive, or arise out of mere external command, the reasons of which we are not acquainted with; and as the latter are moral, or arise out of the apparent reason of the case, without such external command. *Unless this caution be observed, we shall run to endless confusion* *." Whether Mr. B. is sufficiently *cautious* in observing this necessary distinction, will appear, I presume, in the sequel of this treatise.

§ 4 The following remarks from the above mentioned author, concerning our *comparative obligations* to obey positive and moral commands, appear just and pertinent. "Suppose two standing precepts injoined by the same authority; that, in certain conjunctions, it is impossible to obey both; that the former is moral, i. e. a precept of which we see the reasons, and that they hold in the particular case before us; but that the latter is positive, i. e. a precept of which we do not see the reasons; it is indisputable that our obligations are to obey the *former*; because there is an apparent reason for this preference, and none against it. Farther, positive institutions, I suppose all those which christianity enjoins, are *means* to a moral end; and the *end* must be acknowledged more excellent than the means. Nor is the observance of these institutions any religious obedience at all, or of any value, otherwise

* Butler's Analogy, Part II. Chap. I. p. 227.

wiſe than as it proceeds from a moral principle. I add, that the whole moral law is as much matter of revealed command as poſitive inſtitutions are; for the ſcripture injoins every moral virtue. In this reſpect then they are both upon a level. But the moral law is, moreover, written upon our hearts; interwoven into our very nature. And this is a plain intimation of the author of it, which is to be preferred when they interfere. —— Upon occaſion of mentioning together poſitive and moral duties, the ſcripture always puts the ſtreſs of religion upon the latter, and never upon the former: which, tho' no ſort of allowance to neglect the former, when they do not interfere with the latter; yet is a plain intimation, that when they do, the latter are to be preferred.—Our Lord himſelf, from whoſe command alone the obligation of poſitive inſtitutions ariſes, has taken occaſion to make the compariſon between them and moral precepts; when the Phariſees cenſured him, for *eating with publicans and ſinners*; and alſo when they cenſured his diſciples, for plucking the ears of corn on the ſabbath day. Upon this compariſon he has determined expreſsly, and in form, which ſhall have the preference when they interfere. And by delivering his authoritative determination in a proverbial manner of expreſſion, he has made it general: *I will have mercy and not ſacrifice.* For the ſenſe and the very literal words of our Lord's anſwer, are as applicable to *any other* inſtitution, on a compariſon between poſitive and moral

duties, as to this upon which they were ſpoken. It is remarkable too, that, as the words are a quotation from the Old Teſtament, they are introduced, on both the forementioned occaſions, with a declaration, that the Phariſees did not underſtand the meaning of them. This, I ſay, is very remarkable. For ſince it is ſcarce poſſible, for the moſt ignorant perſon, not to underſtand the literal ſenſe of the paſſage in the prophet; (Hoſ. vi.) and ſince underſtanding the literal ſenſe would not have prevented their *condemning the guiltleſs*; (Mat. xii. 7.) it can hardly be doubted, that the thing which our Lord really intended in that declaration, was, that the Phariſees had not learnt from it, as they might, wherein the general ſpirit of religion conſiſts.—Yet it is highly neceſſary that we remind ourſelves, how great preſumption it is to *make light* of any inſtitutions of divine appointment; that our obligation to obey *all* God's commands whatever, are abſolute and indiſpenſable: and that commands merely poſitive, admitted to be [*ſuch*, and] from him, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them: an obligation moral in the ſtricteſt and moſt proper ſenſe *."

It may here be objected, "Was not Abraham commendable for obeying a poſitive command at the expenſe of a moral one?" I anſwer, Abraham did well to obey the command to ſacrifice his ſon, for it was in perfect conſiſtence with the *morality* of the ſixth command. Which only implies

* Butler's Analogy, *ut ſupra*. p. 230—234.

implies that one *man* has no right to take away the life of another *unjuſtly*, but by no means intends that God has no right to take away the forfeited life of a ſinful creature, which is abſolutely at his diſpoſal, by what methods he pleaſes. Whatever excellence there was in Abraham's obedience, muſt ſpring from a diſpoſition regarding God's abſolute dominion, power, wiſdom, &c. And his ſacrificing Iſaac was no duty any further than he was *certain* God commanded it. Had he been more forward or particular in that buſineſs than the command was expreſs and circumſtantial, he muſt have been in that proportion guilty of a preſumptuous crime; inaſmuch as the poſitive command required him to offer violence to the natural feelings of humanity. Dr. GROSVENOR well obſerves, "Where the evidence is not *ſo clear*, the obligation is weakened in proportion; but where the terms are *plainly* binding, and ſtrongly commanding, there the obligation is not to be evaded.—When we ſee the broad ſeal of heaven, where there is the divine warrant, *Thus ſaith the Lord*; it is worſe than trifling, to cavil and ſay, It is but an external rite."—But we ſhould not forget, that tho' *all* poſitive duties are above the reach of mere reaſon, ſome may be *more remote* than others; and the nearer thoſe duties approach to our natural notions of congruity and expediency, the leſs is the evidence of poſitive authority, and therefore a ſmaller degree of it is proportionably binding.

§ 5. NOTWITHSTANDING the indisputable superiority of laws natural and moral to those of a positive nature, whenever they come in competition, the latter are of very great use and consequence. "The very notion of a visible church implies positive institutions, for the *visibility* of the church *consists* in them. Take away every thing of this kind, and you lose the very notion itself. So that if a visible church and an instituted method of education, are advantages, the reason and *importance* of positive institutions in general is most obvious, since without them these advantages could not be secured to the world †."

§ 6. ALL acts of religious worship are either internal or external. All *internal* acts are of *moral* consideration as resulting from certain relations. As soon as these *relations* are discovered, whether by the dictates of reason or pure revelation it matters not, the obligation of duty naturally arises from them, independent of any external command to inforce the same. The propriety of this distinction will easily appear when we observe, that no internal act of religion *can be* our duty but what springs from *relative* considerations, and since no relation subsisting between moral agents can be *ascertained*, but we are immediately, from the nature of the case, laid under every obligation possibly assignable. Hence it follows, that whatever precepts and duties deserve the name of *positive*, must be of an *external* nature. Indeed "a *disposition* to obey divine

† Idem, p. 216, 217.

divine orders, either poſitive or moral, (as Dr. GROSVENOR juſtly obſerves) is part of that *holineſs without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.*" But then it is equally true, that this very diſpoſition is, in the propereſt ſenſe, of moral obligation *prior* to any external command, and, therefore, is perfectly diſtinct in its nature from the *poſitiveneſs* of thoſe divine orders. But notwithſtanding all poſitive duties be in their own nature *external*, it does not follow, that all external acts of religious worſhip are alſo poſitive. To elucidate this matter a little I would offer theſe two remarks:

1. THAT God is to be worſhipped *in general*, even in *ſome external* form, is of *moral* obligation. For, as the obligation of internal worſhip ariſes from the relation we ſtand in to God, without a poſitive command, ſo it is clear, from the nature of the caſe, this internal worſhip, reverence, gratitude, &c. ought to be externally *manifeſted* in a manner ſuited to theſe emotions. Nor can it be doubted, that there is a natural congruity between ſuch internal emotions and certain *modes* of expreſſing them in preference to others as leſs proper; for there are, doubtleſs, *ſome poſtures* and geſtures of the body, independent of national cuſtom, or the like circumſtances, that may with *more propriety* than others be termed, reverent, humble, modeſt, decent, devout, &c. and we are under a moral obligation to *prefer* the moſt becoming, whenever this is not determined by poſitive command.

2. THAT any *particular* external mode of worship is enjoined to men, the reason and propriety of which does not appear prior to the external command, is of *positive consideration*. Positive precepts may be considered as certain *exceptions* from a general rule, but as a general rule and common analogy ought to be quitted *only* where they are incompatible with the exception, and precisely in that *degree*; so we are to recede from moral and analogical reasoning, in our inquiries after the path of duty, *only* when obliged by a positive precept *as such*, or exactly in the proportion it is so, and no further. For to do otherwise would be to quit a common rule without any apparent necessity; and to deviate from a way, which is at least probably the right one, to another which is absolutely uncertain. To this I would add, that the circumstances of an action being *naturally convenient*, may and ought to have considerable influence in determining what is or is not our duty, in those circumstances of it that are indeterminate; for this plain reason, that we are sure the law of self-preservation is the law of God in all those cases where he has not shewn us the contrary. Whatever, therefore, appears to militate against life, health, and comfort, without any revealed warrant, may and ought to be avoided, on the principles of natural law and obligation. This is applicable to all the unprescribed circumstances of *positive* duties, as well as to those of a moral kind. "This law of nature, (as Sir WILLIAM BLACK-

BLACKSTONE obſerves) being coeval with mankind and dictated by God himſelf, is of courſe ſuperior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the Globe, in all countries, and at all times*," when not *expreſsly* countermanded by poſitive interpoſition.

§ 7. FROM what has been ſaid we may further conclude, that a poſitive inſtitution is a kind of *ingrafture*, ſo to ſpeak, upon the law of our nature; the former is the ſcyon, the latter is the ſtock. The choice of the inſtitution depends upon the ſovereign pleaſure of God. But when this is determined, the law of nature written in our hearts, the principles of reaſon and common ſenſe, or ſome revealed law, are *preſuppoſed*, and may be compared to the ſtock upon which the ingrafture is made. For as the ſcripture itſelf ſheweth not with certainty what books are divine; as all acceptable obedience to divine commands preſuppoſes a ſuitable diſpoſition; as all arts and ſciences have their *præcognita*, and every branch of abſtruſe learning preſuppoſes firſt principles, and even the moſt infallible geometrical demonſtration its axioms and poſtulates; ſo all poſitive laws and inſtitutions take ſome principles for *granted*.

§ 8. ANOTHER conſequence that follows naturally from the preceding conſiderations is this: That there are *no precepts* now in force, at leaſt, of a nature *merely* poſitive. None, I mean, wherein all the *minutiæ* of circumſtances neceſſary

* Comment. *ut ſupra.*

for the discharge of the duty commanded are specified by the Lawgiver; and therefore those institutions of christianity which are commonly termed positive are but *partially* so. The necessity of ascertaining this difference in the present controversy is very apparent; and yet it has somehow hitherto been strangely overlooked, by both contending parties. The Pædobaptists in general have tamely submitted to this position, "*Baptism and the Lord's Supper are positive institutions*," in its most absolute and undistinguished sense, as a maxim not to be controverted; and the Antipædobaptists are, doubtless, much obliged to us for this piece of complaisance, as it is evidently the main pillar of their cause, and the armour in which they trust. Pertinent to our present purpose is the following remark of Bp. WARBURTON; "When two parties go upon different [principles] they naturally begin with examining one another's, whereby the true being at length settled or discovered, by its aid the controversy is timely determined; but where a *false* principle has the luck (as his Lordship expresses it) to be embraced by *both sides*, they may wrangle for ever, and be, after all, but farther from the truth *." But it may be asked, if we resign the good old maxim, "that the two standing ordinances of christianity, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are *positive* institutions, and *absolutely* so," and allow that they are of a *mixed* nature, or partly positive and partly moral; how are we to draw the line of

* Bp. WARBURTON's Alliance, B. I. Sect. 1.

of diſtinction? If moral and poſitive precepts thus run into each other, like the ſhades of a painted figure, or the colours of the rainbow, how can we aſcribe to all their due, or determine where the one ends and the other begins? Towards ſolving this difficulty I beg leave to propoſe the following obſervations.

§ 9. (1) IT is utterly abhorrent from ſound divinity, as well as logical preciſion, not to ſay chriſtian modeſty, to determine, *a priori*, with what *degree* of evidence any given particular inſtitution *ought* to have been delivered by the divine Legiſlator, any more than what the inſtitution *itſelf* ſhould be.

FOR, as Bp. BUTLER obſerves, "our principal obligation of ſearching the ſcripture, and to what all our inquiries ought to be directed, is, in order to ſee what the ſcheme of revelation *really is*, inſtead of determining before hand from reaſon, what the reaſon of it *muſt* be *." To *inveſtigate* the degree of evidence from the fact of the inſtitution, and to *infer* the degree of the obligation from the evidence found, is *our* province; but to determine what the nature and degree of the evidence *muſt* be, is the excluſive prerogative of the Inſtitutor himſelf, whoſe will and authority muſt be the ſole and excluſive ground of the inſtitution.

I AM, therefore, not a little ſurpriſed to find the gentleman, whoſe work I am more immediately examining, and for whoſe abilities and diſ-

* BUTLER's Analogy, *ut ſupra*.

position I have a real esteem, expressing himself as follows: "Positive institutions originate in the divine pleasure, and derive their whole being from the sovereign will of God. — We *cannot know any thing* about their precise nature, their true design, the proper subjects of them, or the right mode of their administration *further than the scriptures teach.*—It does not appear from the records of the Old Testament, that, when Jehovah appointed any branch of ritual worship, he left either the subject of it, or the mode of administration, to be inferred by the people, either from the relation in which they stood to himself; or from general moral precepts; or from any branch of his moral worship; nor yet from any other well known positive rite: but he gave THEM special directions relating to the very case.—— For as nothing but the divine will can oblige the conscience, and as *that will cannot be known, unless revealed*; so when made known, whether in reference to moral or positive duties, it must oblige. CONSEQUENTLY, SEEING BAPTISM IS AS REALLY AND INTIRELY A POSITIVE INSTITUTION AS ANY THAT WERE GIVEN TO THE CHOSEN TRIBES, we cannot with safety infer either the mode or the subject of it, from any thing short of a precept or precedent, recorded in scripture, and relating to that very ordinance. *It seems natural hence to infer*, that our sovereign Lord MUST HAVE REVEALED HIS WILL concerning the ordinance of baptism in a manner *proportional* to its obligation and importance.

For,

For, as an appointment of Chriſt, it originated in his will, and from a *revelation of that will* the whole of its obligation reſults. In proportion, therefore, as we annex the idea of *obſcurity* to what he ſays about the mode and the ſubject of it, we either ſink the idea of obligation to regard it, or *impeach the wiſdom, or the goodneſs, or the equity of our divine Legiſlator:* for we neither have, *nor can have any acquaintance* with a poſitive inſtitution, *farther than it is revealed.* We are, THEREFORE, obliged to conclude that our Lord HAS CLEARLY REVEALED his pleaſure, with reference to this appointment, in that code of law, and rule of religious worſhip, which he gave to the church, in the volume of the New Teſtament *."

THUS alſo Dr. S. " Here I would obſerve then, that all poſitive inſtitutions depend *ſolely* upon the *will* of the inſtitutor, and that therefore in every queſtion relating to them, we muſt be guided by his *expreſs declarations*, or by thoſe of perſons he has duly authorized to *ſignify his will.* Nor is it to be doubted that a wiſe legiſlator will, *in all matters of this ſort*, take care to expreſs his mind *in the moſt plain and intelligible manner.* Now baptiſm is a poſitive inſtitution of Chriſt: and, agreeably to his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, he has expreſſed himſelf in *the moſt clear and explicit manner* reſpecting both the mode and the ſubject of it. — And THEREFORE the iſſue of this inquiry ought to be reſted *alone* upon

* p. 11—13.

upon his own *expreſs declarations*, and thoſe of his apoſtles and firſt miniſters *."—And again, "A right to baptiſm muſt depend, and depend alone, upon the direct expreſs command of the inſtitutor; for it is abſurd to talk of analogy and conſequence in the matter of poſitive inſtitutions †." And again, "As poſitive duties depend ſolely upon the will of the inſtitutor, every queſtion reſpecting them ought in reaſon to be decided by his expreſs declarations; which declarations, *if he be a wiſe legiſlator, will, no doubt, be clear and explicit* ‡." There are other paſſages in both theſe writers very much to the ſame purpoſe.

NOT to ſtop to examine the truth and propriety of ſome things in the above quotations which are taken for granted; ſuch as the *abſolute poſitiveneſs* of *every branch* of ritual worſhip under the Old Teſtament œconomy; wherein *nothing* was to be *inferred* by the people; or to inquire whether it can be *juſtly* concluded that *becauſe*, on ſuppoſition that the Old Teſtament rituals were of that kind, thoſe of the New Teſtament *muſt* be ſo likewiſe; both which I believe they would find too difficult to prove: paſſing by ſuch things, let us attend to the point of immediate conſideration;—which is to demonſtrate contrary to theſe aſſertions, that the New Teſtament inſtitutions ARE NOT of a nature *merely poſitive*; or, in other words, that Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper, in their completeneſs and comprehenſion, are

* Anſwer to A. p. 3, 5. † p. 90. ‡ p. 293.

are inſtitutions of a *mixed* nature, that is to ſay, partly poſitive and partly moral. And in proſecution of this deſign I further obſerve that,

§ 10. (2) FROM theſe gentlemen's own account, it follows, that the inſtitutions of the New Teſtament are either of a *mixed* nature or not *at all* poſitive. For according to them, *all matters of this ſort* ſhould be expreſſed in the moſt plain and intelligible, the moſt clear and explicit manner; and, THEREFORE, ſeeing baptiſm and the Lord's Supper are not IN FACT ſo circumſtantially deſcribed as not to need, or ſo minutely expreſs as to prohibit moral reaſoning, analogy and conſequence; it inevitably follows, that, if theſe inſtitutions are not of a *mixed* nature, partly poſitive and partly moral, they are no poſitive inſtitutions AT ALL. And as they allow none to be of that ſort but theſe two, chriſtianity muſt be left without any; and ſince chriſtianity is the laſt and unalterable diſpenſation of religion among men, it is impoſſible there ſhould be any to the end of time; and ſo all poſitive inſtitutions are, on their own ſuppoſition, fairly and utterly baniſhed out of the world.

BESIDES, their anticipated mode of determining the degree of evidence with which a poſitive law *ought to be* enacted, is quite ſubverſive of the very nature of ſuch a law; for it is allowed on all hands, and by theſe gentlemen in the plaineſt terms, that the diſtinguiſhing nature of poſitive laws conſiſts in the meaſure and the degree of their *inſtitution*, and that they derive their whole

whole being from the *sovereign will* of God. And thus their reasoning is built upon a *petitio principii*, a begging of the question, whereby they first take it for granted, that baptism is an institution merely positive, and then take it further for granted, that being such it *must be* free from all obscurity.

§ 11. (3) But if it be contended, that our Lord has, *actually*, been plain and explicit in the institution of this ordinance, and that therefore it is easy to be understood: I might ask, to *whom* is it easy? and what *sense* of it is easy? Is it the honest christian, the judicious divine, the learned critic, or the profound universal scholar to whom the sense is *easy?* But what sense of the institution is so plain and easy? Mr. B. and Dr. S. no doubt, think that their *own* sense bids fair for this character. But here is an extraordinary phenomenon! here are not a few thousands of honest christians; not a few hundreds of judicious divines, learned critics, profound scholars; commentators who have developed the most abstruse parts of holy writ; who yet cannot see this sense of the institution which is so *easy*. Can *that sense* of a passage of scripture, or of the nature and design of an institution, be with any propriety called *plain* and *easy*, *clear*, *explicit* and *most intelligible*, which five men out of twenty contend is the true sense, but which the other fifteen, possessed of an equal share of parts, piety and learning, maintain is the wrong sense? That great numbers should unanimously stand out against some kinds of truth, not very abstruse

ſtruſe in their own nature, is a very poſſible caſe; either when a truth may not appear to be of ſo much importance as to engage perſons duly qualified to ſtudy it with cloſe application; or when it has been a point of mere ſpeculation; or when ſlaviſh fear and worldly intereſt have prevailed over the honeſt dictates of conſcience; but that ſo many proteſtant worthies, who have left all to follow Chriſt; that ſo many learned commentators and caſuiſts, of unblemiſhed character, of unexceptionable ability, having no intereſt to ſerve whereby the judgment ſhould be biaſſed, or the conſcience bribed; calling no man maſter upon earth, but, with a generous freedom, ſhaking off the prejudices of education, the ſhackles of cuſtom, and the influence of different ſyſtems; that theſe, I ſay, ſhould oppoſe unanimouſly the ſenſe of an inſtitution *quite plain* and *eaſy* to be underſtood, is a caſe, I believe, unparallelled and unaccountable. I would rather infer, and with what propriety let the reader judge, that either the Antipædobaptiſt ſenſe of Chriſt's inſtitution is *not at all* the true ſenſe, or, at any rate, a ſenſe *very difficult* to come at.

§ 12. BUT Mr. B. ſtill urges, that " in proportion as we annex the idea of *obſcurity* to what is ſaid about the mode or the ſubject of baptiſm, we either ſink the idea of obligation to regard it, or impeach the wiſdom, or the goodneſs, or the equity of the divine Legiſlator." That his idea of the inſtitution of baptiſm, as an ANTIPÆDOBAPTIST, appears to by far the greater number

number of competent judges an *obscure* one, is an inconteſtible *fact*; judges competent, I mean, in a moral as well as natural reſpect. And, therefore, it follows, on his own principles, that their obligation to adopt the Antipædobaptiſt Hypotheſis is *ſunk* in proportion; and that the perſons, ſo qualified, who can ſee *no truth* in it, are under *no obligation* to embrace it; but are obligated to retain the PÆDOBAPTIST ſyſtem, as what they ſee *more clearly*.

ALLOWING, therefore, our annexing the Idea of *obſcurity* to what is ſaid about the ſubject and the mode of baptiſm, in the reſpect now mentioned, to be true, I might be excuſed from vindicating myſelf and my friends from the crime of impeaching the divine wiſdom, goodneſs, and veracity, by adopting the alternative of ſinking the obligation; were it not that Mr. B.'s charges run ſtill higher, when ſpeaking of the ſignification of the terms of the inſtitution. "Nay, ſays he, were the leading term in any human law, to have an ambiguity in it, equal to that for which our Brethren plead with regard to the word *baptiſm*; ſuch law would certainly be conſidered as betraying, either the weakneſs, or the wickedneſs, of the legiſlator; and be condemned, as opening a door to perpetual chicane and painful uncertainty. Far be it, then, from us to ſuppoſe, that our gracious and omniſcient Lord ſhould give a law relating to divine worſhip, and obligatory on the moſt illiterate of his real diſciples, which may be fairly conſtrued to mean,

mean, *this* or *that* or the *other* action—a law which is calculated to excite and perpetuate contention among his wiſeſt and ſincereſt followers—a law, that would diſgrace a Britiſh Parliament in reſpect of its *tripple* meaning, as being involved in the dark ambiguity of a Pagan oracle †." What! and is Mr. B. alſo among the analogical, hypothetical, and conſequential reaſoners, upon the matter of a poſitive inſtitution? This mode of reaſoning, on *our* principles, would have ſome plauſibility; on *his* is quite out of character. But what ſignifies ſetting up our own idea of propriety againſt a plain fact; it is a *fact*, that wiſe and good men *cannot* ſee the eſſentiality of dipping in the leading term of this law; while Mr. B. and his friends think they do. It is a *fact*, that wiſe and good men ſincerely believe the law of chriſtian baptiſm extends to infants, and that they are as much included in the very terms as their parents are. But does it from thence follow, that our Divine Legiſlator has leſs wiſdom than a Britiſh Parliament; or deſigns an impoſition like a Pagan oracle?

§ 13. Mr. B.'s argument is, that as the principal terms of all approved human laws are without ambiguity in their meaning, *therefore* much more *ought* the laws of Chriſt relating to divine worſhip to be ſo. But do we forget that poſitive inſtitutions depend intirely on the *ſovereign will* of Heaven, and that we know *nothing* about them further than they are revealed? Allowing

† P. 34.

lowing this; yet, it may be objected, if our all-wise Legislator *does* enact any law of this kind, we may reasonably presume that it will be so *plain* and *easy* that the most illiterate of his real disciples cannot mistake its meaning. This is still indulging *supposition* against *fact*.

LET us suppose, for illustration' sake, that an ante-diluvian saint had adopted this mode of reasoning.—" It is true, it depends intirely on " the sovereign will of God whether he will re- " veal himself to my posterity, whether he will " give them laws and positive institutions, to re- " gulate their lives and prove their obedience; " but *if he do* so favour them, I may easily infer " from his infinite wisdom, goodness and equity; " from his omniscience, and grace, that these " laws and institutions must be so *plain* and *easy* " that the most ignorant of the righteous, cannot " misinterpret them. For were I, a sinful short- " sighted creature, to form a code of laws for " my posterity, they should be all of that charac- " ter, and therefore much more will those which " the Most High may deliver, be free from all " ambiguity. Yes, He sees the end from the " beginning; and as he is capable by reason of " his unerring wisdom, so he is bound by his " immense goodness, to prevent all occasion of " chicane and painful uncertainty. If prophets " be raised to address my ruined posterity, their " message must be so *plain* and *easy* to be un- " derstood, that none of those to whom they are " delivered can mistake their meaning; their cre-

" dentials

" dentials muſt be of ſuch a nature as to admit " of no debate whether they ſhould be credited " or not. And when the promiſed Saviour ap- " pears, he will, undoubtedly, deliver himſelf in " ſuch a manner as to prevent all diſpute among " his followers, eſpecially concerning matters of " everlaſting moment. There will be no queſ- " tion among them whether this Saviour is the " Creator himſelf in man's nature, or only an " extraordinary prophet of ſuperior wiſdom and " holineſs; ſince all this may be prevented by a " few words out of his own mouth. He will " put it out of all doubt with all the wiſe and " pious of his followers, whether he is to be ſerved " with, or without, a form of devotion in pub- " lick aſſemblies; whether chriſtian magiſtrates " ought, or ought not, to form an *alliance* be- " tween the church and the ſtate; whether or " not ſome perſon, for the time being, ſhould " act as his viceroy to the end of time, at the " head of his univerſal church. And if he ſhould " inſtitute a rite of initiation into his church, it " is reaſonable to expect that his wiſdom and " goodneſs will prevent all painful uncertainty " reſpecting the *mode* of admiſſion, and who are " the proper *ſubjects*," eſpecially when we conſider that " all doubt of the matter might be precluded by a few plain words." Thus the pious ante-diluvian might meditate, and reaſon, *a priori*, from the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Great Supreme; rejoicing in the proſpect of the halcyon days which his poſterity ſhould enjoy, when all laborious

ſearch

search, and tedious analogical reasoning, would be utterly precluded by the explicitness and perspicuity with which he would signify his pleasure. All this seems quite reasonable, very desirable, and mighty fine; but yet is attended with one great infelicity, it is a theory which does not agree with FACTS. But shall a benighted sinner exclaim, when *his* views of propriety and wisdom are confronted, deranged, and totally overthrown, "the LORD's ways are not equal!" Rather let me shrink to my proper nothingness, and say, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his counsels, and his ways*, his providence and his various dispensations, *how past finding out!* "Let us appeal (says Dr. S.) to the words of the institution, which no doubt are expressed, *as all laws* OUGHT TO BE, in so *clear* a manner as that he who runs may read." I walk and read, stand and read, meditate and read, pray and read, and yet cannot discern the sense he puts upon the law of the institution. And, what is far more extraordinary, thousands whom it concerns, many of whom are far better qualified to judge than I am, are equally at a loss to discover, what Dr. S. pronounces to be *without doubt*, so *clear* a meaning that he who runs may read it. *

OUR

* WHAT the pious Mr. FLAVEL said of himself, is, no doubt, the unfeigned sentiment of numbers not less sincere and upright than he, however superior he was to most divines in ministerial abilities and usefulness; *viz.* "We have a witness in your bosom, "(says he in his reply to Mr. CARY) that the defence of *Christ's* "*pure*

OUR opponents involve themſelves in a glaring inconſiſtence. They maintain that poſitive rites depend ſolely on the pleaſure of the Inſtitutor, and then, with the ſame breath, plead that their evidence *muſt* be in a certain given degree of explicitneſs, that is, the ſuperlative degree. For if they are not expreſſed in the *moſt* plain and intelligible manner, they are not worthy of a *wiſe* Legiſlator. This is to profeſs *abſolute ſubjection* to the ſovereign Lord, and afterwards to *preſcribe rules* for him to enact his laws. Thus they inſiſt upon a poſtulatum on which to erect their ſyſtem, which it is out of our power to grant them without offering open violence to logical preciſion and ſound Theology.

§ 14. FROM what has been ſaid I conclude — ſince it is eſſential to an inſtitution *merely poſitive*, our opponents themſelves being judges, it ſhould be free from all obſcurity and ambiguity, relative to mode and ſubject, and ſince the inſtitution of baptiſm does not bear that character, as ſtubborn facts proclaim — that baptiſm is an ordinance of a *mixed* nature. And it appears further reaſonable to conclude, from the foregoing premiſes, that, as all allow baptiſm has *ſomething* in it of a poſitive nature, "the ſetting

"*pure worſhip and inſtitutions* hath coſt us ſomething; and as for "me, were I convinced by all that you have here ſaid, or any "of your friends, that in baptizing the infants of believers we did "really depart from the primitive purity, I would renounce it, "and turn Anabaptiſt the ſame day." FLAVEL's Reply to Mr. CARY's Solemn Call. *Works*, Vol. II. p. 1003. Firſt Ed.

" ing apart a person apparently a proper subject " of the visible church of Christ, by the use of " water, in the Name of the Father, of the Son, " and of the Holy Ghost, by a teacher of christ- " tianity," seems to bid fair for that character. Thus far Pædobaptists and Antipædobaptists generally agree; but whether a total *immersion* of the subject be *essential* to the ordinance, or even the *most proper* mode of admission; and whether some infants are not equally intitled to the privilege as adults; with other questions of inferior consideration, must be necessarily decided by moral and consequential reasoning.

§ 15. Let us now attend to what seems the only remaining method for determining about the degree and proportion of *positiveness* and *morality* in a law or institution commonly termed positive. And here I observe, towards solving this difficulty, the two things following,

1. That we ought carefully to distinguish between what is true of a positive institute in its own nature, or simply and *abstractedly* considered, and the same thing attended with its necessary circumstances. It has been shewn, that baptism is an institution which is positive but in part, and, therefore, that such a distinction as is here proposed is necessary. I am willing then to own the propriety of Mr. B.'s reasoning upon the nature and essential properties of positive institutions, *as far as they are such*, but deny that any just consequences from them are favourable to Antipædobaptism. And if we admit,

what

what I hope has been ſufficiently proved, and what the following pages will more abundantly demonſtrate, that there is no inſtitution of the goſpel diſpenſation ſo merely poſitive as not requiring prudential and moral aid to determine about the due performance and proper ſubjects thereof; and conſequently, that the ordinance of baptiſm does not agree to the *abſtract* notion of poſitive inſtitutions; I venture to aſſert, as no leſs true than extraordinary, that there is not ONE of all the quotations from Pædobaptiſt writers contained in the firſt part of his *Pædobaptiſm examined*, concerning the nature of poſitive inſtitutions, but is PERFECTLY CONSISTENT with Pædobaptiſt principles! But the ſpecious ſophiſm was ſupported by arbitralily uniting what were in themſelves different; by extending the abſtract nature of an inſtitution, to the particular circumſtances of it.

2. LAYING aſide all preconceived ideas, we ſhould carefully inquire *how far* any inſtitution in queſtion, from an impartial ſurvey of what is recorded of it, *agrees* with the definition of a poſitive inſtitution in its abſtract ſenſe. We all agree that ſuch an inſtitution, as deſerves the denomination of poſitive, is *that*, the reaſon of which we do not ſee, yet delivered with ſuch plainneſs, clearneſs, and circumſtantial evidence, as is liable to no miſconſtruction from a perſon of common capacity and religious ſincerity. Let us apply this rule to baptiſm, and we find, that there are *ſome* things wherein the rule and the

ordinance agree, and *other* things wherein they disagree. Bp. BUTLER will furnish us with a slight specimen of the manner of applying the above rule. "The most important obligations and privileges signified by baptism are of *moral* consideration.—For instance, if some are commanded *to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; there are obligations of duty resulting from the command *as positive*, but the *importance* of these duties may be judged of by observing, that they arise not from positive command *merely*, but also from the offices which appear from scripture to belong to those divine persons in the gospel dispensation; or from the *relations*, which, we are there informed, they stand in to us*." This I call a *specimen*, but that the distinction above noticed is applicable to the subject and circumstances of baptism, will be afterwards considered.

§ 16. HENCE we may infer, that analogical and consequential reasoning is not only lawful, but *essential* to this controversy.

WE have seen (§ 12.) that our opponents themselves do occasionally run into this strain, however inconsistent with their favourite maxim; and we have seen that, hitherto, it has done them no service. From their being so extremely reluctant to admit of this sort of argument on the subject of baptism, we may justly suspect that it is proportionably injurious to their tenet. Mr. B. indeed, is very explicit on this head, as before

* BUTLER's Analogy, *ut supra*.

fore obſerved; " Except it be maintained (ſays he) that poſitive ordinances are to be *intirely* governed by poſitive law and primitive example, it is *impoſſible* for the Antipædobaptiſts to ſtand their ground by *fair argument* in various caſes, when diſputing with Pædobaptiſts as ſuch *." Dr. S. inſiſts, " that preſumptive proofs are inſufficient to eſtabliſh duties of a poſitive kind ‖." And I take the liberty of inſiſting in my turn, that, as no ſuch duty exiſts, in his application of the term *poſitive*, preſumptive proofs are very good ones, becauſe they are the very beſt that the nature of the caſe can admit of. To argue from what is *certain* in one caſe, the *probability* of a caſe leſs evident, when the latter bears ſome ſtriking relation or reſemblance to the former, has ever been reckoned fair and proper in ſubjects of morality and duty; it therefore follows, that, as the duty in queſtion is partly founded on *moral* grounds, the ſame method of arguing is fair and proper to a certain degree in the preſent caſe. For when the *circumſtances* of a duty commonly termed poſitive are left in an indeterminate ſtate, and therefore of neceſſity muſt yield to *moral* conſiderations, and when theſe moral conſiderations do not ariſe immediately from the evident relation of the caſe in hand, or are not determined clearly by precept or example; what more rational method of determining theſe circumſtances, than by recurring by means of analogy

* p. 462. ‖ p. 292.

to thoſe which we are ſure met with the divine approbation?

WHAT has been ſaid already upon this article, might appear, I preſume, quite ſufficient, in vindication of a method of defence which our opponents would fain deprive us of, were it not that they are impertinently inimical to it upon every occaſion, as might be eaſily ſhewn by numerous quotations out of their writings, and Mr. B.'s Pædobaptiſm Examined in particular. But as their favourite terms, POSITIVE LAW and APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE, as oppoſed to *moral* and *analogical* reaſoning, are a two-edged ſword, which they brandiſh with great parade, and with which they pretend to do great execution; let us now ſee whether this weapon may not be wreſted out of their hands.

§ 17. THAT principle, whereby our opponents decry all uſe of analogy in this debate, is reducible to the moſt glaring *abſurdities*. For,

(1) IT is impoſſible that Mr. B. Dr. S. or any one elſe in the preſent day, ſhould know any thing about this ordinance without the aids of the very method which they ſo much oppoſe. This is evident when we reflect, that as ſcripture can never be proved to be of divine original, ſo neither can any particular part of it be proved to have *this* meaning rather than *that*, but by means of moral and analogical reaſoning. The evidence of revelation is either external or internal; its *external* evidence muſt depend on the *faithfulneſs* of our predeceſſors who have recorded and tranſmitted

tranſmitted ſuch facts as conſtitute the ſame; but will any man, *compos mentis*, heſitate a moment reſpecting the neceſſity of examining the pretenſions and credentials of our fellow-mortals, when they aſſert they were ſent of God to claim the attention, belief, and obedience of mankind? And how can this be decided without the aſſiſtance of moral reaſoning? Its *internal* evidence muſt be ſought by the ſame method; for nothing can be of God which is evidently and demonſtrably falſe or impious, however recommended by ſigns and wonders.

NOR will it avail to ſay, the moſt abſtruſe things, indeed, will admit of ſuch inveſtigation, but ſome things are "ſo plain and eaſy to be underſtood that he who runs may read." Such parts of ſcripture, then, need only to be propoſed, and they appear *ſelf-evident*. I will not deny but there are many ſuch truths in ſcripture; inaſmuch as ſome of the plaineſt dictates of common ſenſe and reaſon are there recorded. And, indeed, this is no ſmall part of the glory of revelation, that it is "a republication of natural religion; ſo that natural religion, in the words of Bp. BUTLER, ſeems as much proved by the ſcripture revelation, as it would have been, had the deſign of revelation been nothing elſe than to prove it *." But it muſt amount to an evident contradiction to aſſert that *poſitive laws* are *ſelf-evident* in their own nature; for, on the ſuppoſition, we know nothing about them further

* BUTLER's Analogy, *ut ſupra*.

than they are *revealed.* Nor will it mend the matter to say, that *when* revealed they are self-evident; for, it is likewise granted, that they derive their whole force and being from the sovereign *authority* that enjoins them; which authority itself cannot be self-evident, but must be examined, weighed, compared, and finally determined by some *antecedent* principles; and this is the province of moral reason and analogy.

§ 18. But if it be said, that "tho' we need these aids to ascertain the truth of revelation, yet when that is once done we have no farther need of it:" I answer, this can by no means solve the difficulty; for in order to discover the import of any law or precept of holy writ, we must either take the *literal* and strict meaning of it, or we must have recourse to the *design* of the passage from the most probable intention of the Lawgiver; if the *latter*, the point is given up; if the *former*, the most absurd consequences will immediately follow. For it is evident to a demonstration, that two persons, who would undertake to perform a positive command, may both alike plead the strict *letter* of the law to be on their side, and yet one of them may *commit sin* while so doing, and the other discharge incumbent duty. And I may venture to say, there is not a positive law in all the inspired volume, relating to the mosaic or the christian œconomy, but might furnish an illustration and proof of what I assert. To avoid prolixity I shall insist upon the law of baptism only: on which Mr. B. thus

thus reflects. "It ſhould be well obſerved, that when our Lord after his reſurrection, ſays, *Go—baptize*; he does not mention baptiſm by way of alluſion, or incidentally. No, he ſpeaks the language of *legiſlation*; he delivers DIVINE LAW. He mentions and appoints baptiſm as an ordinance of God, and as a branch of human duty. Where, then, muſt we expect preciſion in the uſe of terms, if not on ſuch an occaſion*?" Where? why, in thoſe parts of revelation where man's everlaſting welfare is more immediately concerned. For is it probable that the law of initiation into the viſible kingdom of Chriſt, and an external relation to him and his church, is of more importance, and requiring greater preciſion in its terms, than that which aſcertains their qualification for the kingdom of grace and glory? But ſuppoſing, for argument ſake, that the law of baptiſm (Mat. xxviii. 19.) is delivered with greater preciſion than uſual, and let us try—not with a view to impeach the wiſdom or the goodneſs of Chriſt—let us try, I ſay, whether moral reaſoning and analogy are not neceſſary for the right obſervance of it, even upon our author's own principles.

MR. B. will allow that this law conſiſts of three parts; the action itſelf, *baptize*; the qualification neceſſary for the ſubject previous to baptiſm, implied in the word *teach*; and the commiſſion given to the adminiſtrators, *Go ye*. The firſt of theſe ideas will be more profeſſedly ex-

* p. 33.

amined hereafter; but by the bye, one would think that the great diversity of opinions respecting this *action*, and the various practices of different nations and churches in performing what they apprehend to be included in it, might lead a modest and impartial observer to conclude—not that one party of christians exclusively are in the right, while all the others are *essentially* wrong, many of whom have seriously, deliberately and impartially examined the authority and the mind of their divine Lord in the matter, whose sovereign pleasure is more dear to them than their lives, and whom they would not wilfully offend therein for the world—to conclude, I say, either that the precept is not delivered with all that plainness and precision which our opponents contend for, in favour of *their* manner of performing the *action*, or else that it is of such latitude as to include divers manners. I would only remark, that, supposing (without granting) the exclusive invariable meaning of the term, *baptize*, signifies to immerse, I might, on *that* supposition so fulfil the command *literally*, in plunging a proper subject, as that Mr. B. I am persuaded, would either not admit it to be at all true baptism, or would require no small assistance from that very method of arguing which he oppugns, to prove its validity. But I shall observe, more particularly, some things with respect to the commission of the administrators, which will furnish a second argument against the opposers of analogical and moral reasoning on the subject.

§ 19.

§ 19. (2) IT is impoſſible, on the principle I am oppoſing, for Mr. B. or Dr. S. to prove their right and *authority* to adminiſter the ordinance of baptiſm to any ſubject, and of conſequence the *validity* of the action. The ſentiment I refer to, is, that nothing ſhort of a *precept* or *precedent* will ſuffice for the due performance of the duty. Now that every action performed by apoſtles, diſciples, or ſaints, with, or without, the ſpecial directions of the Holy Spirit, is not to be regarded as a *precedent*, or an example to be imitated, will, I preſume, admit of no debate. It therefore follows that we muſt either gather from moral conſiderations, or conſequential deductions, whether any particular action is to be imitated by us, or not; or elſe that there muſt be a *precept* previouſly given, whereby any ſuch action receives a ſpecial direction and determination to influence our choice. And ſo it remains that an action, however and by whomſoever performed, can be to us no rule of duty, *no precedent at all*, OF ITSELF. It is therefore abſurd to ſay that we can regard *any action* as a precedent, without the aids of inferential reaſoning. We are, now, driven to *precepts* to perform the difficult taſk. Let us, therefore, attend to that "language of legiſlation, that divine law where we may expect, we are told, the greateſt plainneſs and preciſion." GO YE, *therefore, and teach.*—This is the *precept*. But to *whom* is it given? The anſwer, no doubt, will be, To the *diſciples*, and to their *ſucceſſors* in the

pel ministry. Rather, To the disciples, and, we may justly *infer*, to their successors in the gospel ministry to the end of time. For our Lord adds, "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world;" which *more likely* refers to our Lord's authoritative and gracious presence with all the then future, properly qualified teachers and propagators of the gospel, than exclusively his immediate successors, the apostles and disciples, who should be endowed from above with extraordinary abilities, remarkably owned, and attended with signs and wonders for the establishment of the christian religion, on the ruins of the jewish hierarchy.

But supposing, (without granting) that the former proposition is so self-evident as to preclude all need of inference, or analogy. The question still returns, what constitutes a disciple, and teacher of religion? Christian godly parents are disciples, and they also teach their children and domestics the principles of christianity; have *they*, therefore, authority to *baptize* such as they teach? Without analogy and inference how can their pretensions be disproved? May they not plead, from the very passage in question, that because they may teach, they may likewise baptize? It will be said, perhaps, the administration of gospel ordinances belongs to *publick* teachers. But publick and private are *relative* terms; and who shall draw the line of distinction *how far* publick his character and teaching must be? May any one run, without being sent, to teach and baptize? Does

Does this constitute a teacher of christianity, that he *fancies* he may set up for one? or is he to be admitted to the discharge of his ministerial function in some more regular way? How shall we judge about the *regularity* of that way? The wearer of the tripple crown asserts an universal claim to this right of admission, as his sovereign prerogative. With a priestly nod, with roaring bulls, or with dire anathemas, he excludes all of us, who are of the heretical tribe, from approaching to officiate at the baptismal font, or the holy altar. And what is extraordinary, he urges *express*, *literal* passages of scripture, on which to found his pretensions.

§ 20. But Protestants, also, talk of the divine right of episcopacy, and the necessity of an episcopal commission, for preaching God's word, and for the valid ministration of the christian sacraments. And this they attempt to prove from the *holy scriptures*, as well as the doctrine and practice of the primitive church. Thus the *twenty third* article of the church of England, paraphrased by a faithful son and champion; "*It is not lawful* by the law of God *for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching or ministering the sacraments in the congregation* or church of Christ *before he be lawfully called* according to the law of God, *and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent* according to the law of God, *which be chosen and called to this work by men, who* by the law of God *have publick authority given unto*

them in the congregation or church of Chriſt, *to call and ſend miniſters into the Lord's vineyard.* I have put in the words *according to the law of God*, (ſays the Paraphraſt,) becauſe it is certain *that* is meant by the word *lawful* in this place. Theſe articles were drawn up by the Biſhops and Clergy in convocation or ſynod, who were ever eſteemed to be interpreters or expoſitors of the law of God, and to have authority to declare what was agreeable to his laws, and what not—Conſequently (ſays this Doctor of Laws) when they ſay, it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching or miniſtering the ſacraments in the church, they could not mean that it was not lawful in this realm only by virtue of the temporal laws here in force, becauſe they had no authority to declare or expound thoſe laws, but that it was *not lawful* according to the LAW OF GOD, and therefore could not be allowed in any realm, in any country, in any church or ſociety of *chriſtians.*—And in the preface to the forms of ordination, it is ſaid, that *it is* EVIDENT *to all men diligently reading* HOLY SCRIPTURES, *and ancient authors, that from the apoſtles' time, there have been theſe orders of miniſters in Chriſt's church, biſhops, prieſts and deacons, which offices were evermore had in ſuch reverend eſtimation, that no man by his own private authority, might preſume to execute any of them, except he were firſt called, tried, examined and known to have ſuch qualities as were requiſite for the ſame, and alſo by publick prayer, with impoſition of hands, approved and*

and admitted thereunto.—She [the church] alſo declares theſe three orders to be of *divine inſtitution*, when ſhe ſays that *it is evident to all men diligently reading* HOLY SCRIPTURE *that there have been theſe orders of miniſters in Chriſt's church.*—And therefore according to the doctrine of the church of *England*, declared by her ordinal and articles as they expound each other, *it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching, or miniſtering the ſacraments in the congregation* or church of Chriſt, *before he be lawfully called and ſent to execute the ſame by ſome* BISHOP; *that is, before he be* EPISCOPALLY ORDAINED; and this by the LAW OF GOD, who by his Holy Spirit has appointed the order of biſhops, and *directed* that only thoſe who are of that order ſhould ordain others, conſequently is a law not only obligatory in the church of England, but throughout the whole catholic church. —She further declares, in the *twenty ſixth* article, that *altho' in the viſible church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and ſometime the evil have chief authority in the miniſtration of the word and ſacraments; yet foraſmuch as they do not the ſame in their own name but in Chriſt's, and do miniſter by* HIS COMMISSION *and authority, we may uſe their miniſtry both in hearing the word of God, and in the receiving of the ſacraments. Neither is the effect of Chriſt's ordinance taken away by their wickedneſs, nor the grace of God's gifts diminiſhed from ſuch, as by faith, and rightly do receive the ſacraments miniſtered unto them, which be effectual becauſe of Chriſt's*

Chriſt's INSTITUTION *and* PROMISE, *altho' they be miniſtered by evil men.* Here the church plainly makes the VALIDITY of the ſacraments depend intirely upon Chriſt's COMMISSION. For the reaſon alleged why they may be received from evil miniſters, is becauſe ſuch miniſters have *commiſſion and authority* from Chriſt, and that ſacraments ſo received are effectual becauſe of Chriſt's *inſtitution and promiſe*, which evidently implies that where there is no ſuch commiſſion there is not the inſtitution and promiſe of Chriſt, conſequently they are not effectual without the commiſſion. Thus the church of *England* moſt clearly maintains and aſſerts both the *divine right of epiſcopacy*, and alſo the neceſſity of an *epiſcopal commiſſion* to the VALID adminiſtration of the ſacrament *."

§ 21. THUS the large body of venerable Biſhops, together with their numerous ſons and ſervants the Clergy, in convocation aſſembled, as the repreſentatives of millions, deliver their final and permanent ſentiments, concerning the *authority* neceſſary for miniſters to diſcharge the duties of their function, and the *validity* of their miniſtrations thereon depending. But what is very remarkable is, that their determination appeals, not to the uncertain reports of tradition, to moral, inferential, or analogical reaſoning, but to a *poſitive law*; to the *expreſs inſtitution* of Chriſt. And our expounding Doctor juſtifies theſe eccleſiaſtical deciſions, *on the very ſame principles*, by appealing

* Dr. BRETT's Divine Right of Epiſcopacy, § 1—4.

appealing to the language of legiſlation, the divine poſitive command, to which we firſt referred. Thus he ſettles his point: "That the *apoſtolical* or higheſt order, which was appointed to ſupply the place of Chriſt himſelf after his aſcenſion, was intended by him not for a temporary, but a perpetual inſtitution, is evident from the commiſſion he gave them after his reſurrection. For, having ſingled out the eleven Apoſtles, out of above five hundred, to whom he appeared at once after his reſurrection, and appointed them alone to meet him at a mountain in *Galilee*, he ſpake unto them, ſaying, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* And having thus declared his own power, he commits it to them, and ſays, Go *ye therefore*, as my deputies and vicegerents, *and diſciple all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you. And lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, Amen.* In which words he *plainly* ſhews that their office was intended to be continued alway, even unto the end of the world, and he confirms this promiſe with an *Amen*, thereby teſtifying that he would verily and indeed fulfil it. Now it was *plainly* the apoſtolical office which our Saviour here promiſed he would be alway preſent with, to ratify and confirm their miniſtrations. For it was only the eleven diſciples or apoſtles, whom he had before ſent, as he was ſent by the Father, to whom he made the

the promiſe. And that the promiſe was made to the *office* or *order* with which he had veſted them, and not to their perſons, is *evident*, becauſe otherwiſe his promiſe muſt have failed at their deaths, and conſequently he was ſo far from continuing with *them* to the end of the world in the diſcharge of this office, that he did not continue with them an hundred years, for all theſe eleven Apoſtles were dead in leſs than that time. But ſome pretend that the words which we here tranſlate, *the end of the world*, ſignify no more than *the end of that age*. But if they are underſtood to ſignify no more, then the commiſſion to diſciple by baptiſm, and to teach what Chriſt had commanded, muſt end with that age alſo, and then chriſtianity muſt have ceaſed with that age, ſo that ever ſince our preaching has been vain, and your faith alſo vain; for it has ſince had no promiſe of Chriſt to depend upon, if this promiſe is to be extended to no longer time; and that is not *faith*, but *preſumption*, which is not founded upon any promiſe. But if the promiſe is to be extended to the end of the world, and that it muſt be, or there can be no chriſtianity in the world, then muſt the office, the *apoſtolical office* or order, to which it was made, continue ſo long. For Chriſt did not ſay, *I am alway preſent to ratify and confirm theſe miniſtrations by whomſoever performed*, but *I am with you alway*; with *you* whom I have ſent, as I was ſent by the Father, with *you* whom I have appointed to diſciple all nations by baptiſm

tiſm, with *you* whom I have appointed to teach all things which I have commanded and will ratify and confirm what *you* do in theſe miniſtrations, that is, *you* who are commiſſioned for that purpoſe. Therefore the office, *the apoſtolical office*, to which this commiſſion was given, muſt continue for the miniſtry of theſe ordinances, or there is no promiſe that theſe ordinances ſhall be effectual to any after the death of thoſe perſons to whom this commiſſion was particularly given. But if the ordinances continue, then the commiſſion alſo is continued, for the promiſe is not made to the ordinances, but to the commiſſioners in the miniſtration of thoſe ordinances; and therefore if thoſe who have not the commiſſion undertake to adminiſter them, there is no word of promiſe to make ſuch miniſtrations effectual.

" Now whence do the ſacraments receive their *validity?* Certainly not from any thing that is naturally intrinſick to the outward viſible ſign, but from the *inſtitution* of Jeſus Chriſt. But then it is not every kind of baptiſm, or of waſhing with water, that will have effect: it muſt be done according to *his inſtitution*, or it is not the ſacrament which he has ordained. Now when Chriſt ordered baptiſm to be adminiſtered to all nations, when he appointed that all ſhould eat of that bread and drink of that cup, he did not only ordain in what manner, or with what form of words theſe ſacraments ſhould be celebrated, but likewiſe directed what particular *perſons* ſhould

ſhould celebrate them. Thus when he ordered all nations ſhould be made diſciples by baptiſm, he did not indiſcriminately command *all perſons* that ſhould know how to recite the form of words with which baptiſm was to be adminiſtered, to baptize, but the *Apoſtles* only, whom he choſe out of a vaſt multitude of his diſciples, and to them particularly, as I have before obſerved, he gave commiſſion to *go and diſciple all nations, baptizing them.* So alſo when he inſtituted the holy euchariſt, he did not commit the miniſtration of it to all his diſciples, but only to *the twelve.* And to them only he ſaid THIS DO, that is, conſecrate bread and wine, and diſtribute it, as I have now done, in remembrance of me.—The Apoſtles on neither of theſe occaſions met our Saviour by accident, but by appointment. Whereas if he had intended to have commiſſioned *more* for either of theſe purpoſes, he could as eaſily have ordered more to have attended him upon either of theſe occaſions. But by not requiring their attendance, and at the ſame time requiring that of the Apoſtles, he *plainly excluded* all the reſt.—I know it is objected, that a bare omiſſion in this caſe does not amount to a prohibition, and therefore ſince our Saviour only forebore to command, but did not prohibit his other diſciples to adminiſter his ſacraments, we have no ground from ſcripture to ſay that none but *Biſhops*, as *Succeſſors* to the Apoſtles, may miniſter them, or that if any others do it, they are invalid, and of no effect what-

whatſoever. But we anſwer, that *an omiſſion in this caſe does amount to a prohibition.* For wherever a commiſſion is neceſſary to authorize an act, whoſoever is *left out* of the commiſſion, is unauthorized, and therefore cannot perform that act ſo as to make it *valid.*—I never could underſtand that a prince when he granted a commiſſion to levy, or any other commiſſion whatſoever, did expreſsly or in direct terms forbid any other to do what he authorized thoſe to do whom he did commiſſion. For a commiſſion is always given to authorize a man to do that, which without ſuch commiſſion neither he nor any one elſe has otherwiſe a right to do. —There was therefore no occaſion for our Saviour to prohibit others from adminiſtering his ſacraments, ſince the authorizing ſome and not others was itſelf in the nature of the thing as full a prohibition, as if he had forbid them to do theſe things in expreſs words.—Now the promiſes of God with relation to the ſacraments, at leaſt to the ſacrament of *baptiſm*, are not made to the act itſelf, but to the perſons by whom that ſacrament is ordered to be adminiſtered. For Chriſt does not ſay, I am with the act of baptizing, or waſhing in the name of the Father, &c.—But he ſays, *Lo, I am with* YOU *alway, with* YOU *my Apoſtles, with* YOU *whom I have commiſſioned to miniſter baptiſm, and with* YOUR Succeſſors to the end *of the world.* The promiſe being therefore not made to the bare baptiſm or waſhing with water, but to the Apoſtles

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and their Succeſſors, who were commiſſioned to miniſter that ſacrament, thoſe that are not baptized by perſons ſo commiſſioned, have no promiſe to depend upon, that they have received Chriſt's baptiſm; and therefore for any to believe that they have received it, is not *faith* but *preſumption*, and being *not of faith* St. Paul tells us *it is ſin*. It is ſin in the perſon who pretends to *adminiſter* it, for he takes upon him an office unto which God has not called him, he acts without authority, and preſumptuouſly ſuppoſes God will ratify that which he has given him no commiſſion to do: it is alſo *ſin* in the perſon who *receives* it from one whom he knows to have no commiſſion to give it, for he alſo is preſumptuous, and expects a bleſſing where God has made no promiſe of any.—Any pretended baptiſm therefore miniſtered by ſuch as have no commiſſion, is deſtitute of this promiſe, and being ſo, is of no effect or validity, for it is not *Chriſt's baptiſm*, but a baptiſm of *human invention* *."

§ 22. THE attentive reader will eaſily obſerve, that Dr. BRETT, when he wrote the above, was on his road to *Rome*; taking, however, *poſitive precepts*, which always imply their negative, for his guide. And had he compleated his journey, he and his *principles* would have met with the moſt cordial welcome. For by ſuch principles the papal chair is ſupported, and the whole ſtructure of the holy catholic church can boaſt

* Ibid. § 9. 25—28.

boaſt of a ſimilar foundation. "Yes, whether it be an aſſembly of preſbyters, or a council of prelates; whether it be the injunction of a pope, or the mandate of a prince, by which the inventions of men are incorporated with the appointments of God; they admit of the *ſame kind* of defence." How Mr. B. would anſwer the above pretended apoſtolical ſucceſſion, I will not take upon me to determine; but for my own part, ſince my Maker and Judge has given me eyes to ſee and ears to hear, I would attend to what the Spirit of truth ſaith unto the churches; I would diligently and with diffidence ſearch my bible, and eſpecially thoſe parts that ſeem more immediately to refer to theſe matters; ſeek light and direction from the Father of lights, who liberally imparts wiſdom, and prudence profitable to direct; I would examine, reaſon, *moralize*, *analogize*, and uſe ALL the means and methods which a gracious God has furniſhed me with; and, finally, I would ſhew that the Doctor's foundation, notwithſtanding his appeal upon every turn to poſitive appointment and apoſtolic practice, is contrary to the genius of the goſpel diſpenſation, and reducible to manifold *abſurdities*, which can never be a part of the divine will.

§ 23. (3) BUT ſuppoſing, for argument' ſake, theſe gentlemen could extricate themſelves from the above entangling difficulty; it would prove but a temporary relief, for another ſtill greater awaits them. I aſſert, therefore, in the next place, That it is impoſſible, on their own avowed prin-

principles, whereby they discard from their system all use of *moral* considerations, inference and analogy, to determine in practice who is a proper *subject* of baptism among adults and who is not; and if so, are not only *liable* to commit sin instead of performing duty, but as often as they perform the action of baptism they *inevitably* plunge themselves into sin.

LET us not lose sight of that "divine law," where, *if at all*, we may expect precision with respect to the *qualifications* of the subject. *Go*—TEACH—*baptize*"—As "this instructive text, says Mr. B. is the first appointment of baptism for the use of the *gentiles*, and as it is the law of administration to the end of time, so it cannot but require the most submissive regard. For Jesus Christ, on this occasion, expressly claims *all authority in heaven and on earth*. He plainly appears as King of Zion, and Sovereign of the world. His language, here, is not a mere *allusion* to baptism,—but it is the *institution* of that ordinance, it is DIVINE LAW; and therefore the expressions contained in it, must be understood in their natural and obvious meaning, *except any absurdity* would follow such a construction of the sacred statute.—As to any *absurdity* following upon it, our opponents pretend none, but what implies a begging of the question disputed *."—Overlooking a great piece of inconsistency observable in the above paragraph, where it is said that "this text is the *first appointment* of baptism, *for*

* p. 322.

for the uſe of the Gentiles," implying that it *was before appointed for the uſe of the Jews,* which is the real fact; tho' that *firſt inſtitution* is not mentioned in the evangelic hiſtory: and where it is alſo ſaid, " that this is not a mere *alluſion* to baptiſm, but is *the inſtitution* of that ordinance;" which, if it has any determinate meaning, muſt imply, by the oppoſition intended, that it *was not before inſtituted,* which involves a contradiction. It was not a mere alluſion, but *the inſtitution itſelf,* of what was *before inſtituted.* Paſſing by this, what, pray, is that diſputed queſtion which the Pædobaptiſts *beg* at the hands of their brethren? Is it the *favour* of diſputing about the *qualifications* of ſubjects on *moral* grounds? They have no need to *beg* that; it is their *native right,* as the preceding pages, I preſume, do evince; and as the following will further eſtabliſh. Or is it that the *natural* and *primary* ſignification of the greek term, μαθητευσατε, is to *diſciple* rather than to *teach?* At preſent I only obſerve, that, whatever advantage would accrue to the cauſe for which I am pleading, from ſuch a *grant* in its favour, Mr. B. and his friends will be no great gainers by a peaceful *poſſeſſion* of what they ſo highly eſteem. My preſent argument does not require a profeſſed examination of the above queſtion, and therefore let it be now ſuppoſed that the word is properly rendered, TEACH. I will alſo grant that Mr. B. is in the propereſt ſenſe a qualified perſon to execute Chriſt's commiſſion, as properly qualified

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as thoſe to whom the commiſſion was originally given. After all, I inſiſt it is not in his power to perform his appointed work, to *teach* in order to baptiſm, but by the aids of moral and analogical reaſoning. Without this he will be at a loſs about the *kind* and the *degree* of teaching. The word *teach* is vague and indeterminate, becauſe it is not only of various kinds, about which however we will ſuppoſe no miſunderſtanding, but admits of endleſs *degrees*. How much teaching is ſufficient? The *qualification* of the *taught* is by no means to be meaſured by the time, the pains, or the abilities employed by the teacher. Some are ever learning without ever coming to the knowledge of the truth; and few goſpel teachers but have occaſion to make the mournful obſervation. No given degree whatever of ſkill, of faithfulneſs, or of laborious diligence in the diſcharge of his high commiſſion, can enable a teacher to decide who is fit for baptiſm and who is not. Were a teacher to come to this determination, that each catechumen ſhould be ſufficiently qualified when able to recite the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, and a certain ſhort creed; all this, and much more, may be taught a perſon, while he has not a grain of religion; nay, continuing openly irreligious. And ſhould *ſuch* be baptized? Beſides, by what authority could he fix upon ſuch a ſtandard? The object and the end of this teaching, then, is the *moral improvement* of the inſtructed, of which the teacher is the appointed judge.

judge †. But what *poſitive* precept or example can enable him to do this? *Poſitive* inſtitutions are of an *external* nature, as before ſhewn, (§ 6.) and are perfectly diſtinct in their nature from all *moral* conſiderations.

§ 24. MR. B. very frequently refers us to the Moſaic ritual as of a *ſimilar* nature with baptiſm: or, in other words, finds an *analogy* between baptiſm and thoſe antiquated rites, to which he is fond of referring us. And on a certain occaſion, when ſpeaking of the ſignification of terms, he throws down the gauntlet; and, *feeling the ground on which he treads*, exclaims, "We may ſafely challenge our oppoſers to produce an inſtance of this kind out of the Moſaic ritual*." Before we accept the challenge, I would fain learn, upon what principle Mr. B. draws a *compariſon* between baptiſm and the Jewiſh ceremonies? How the law that enacts the former, *ought* to have any thing in it *analogous* to thoſe inforcing the latter? It ſeems he makes it *requiſite* that there ſhould be an *analogy* between theſe laws; "the whole *being* of which, and all their legitimate connections, depend on the ſovereign pleaſure of God ‡."

BUT, inſtead of acceding to this propoſal of producing an inſtance out of the Moſaic ritual enjoined in a manner *ſimilar* to what we con-

† "Admiſſion to baptiſm lies *ſolely* in the breaſt of the *Adminiſtrator*, who is the *only judge* of qualifications for it, and has the *ſole power* of receiving to it, and of rejecting from it." GILL'S Body of Divinity, Vol. III. B. III. Chap. 1.

* P. 33. ‡ P. 460.

ceive the latter to be; I beg leave to demand ONE INSTANCE out of all the numerous precepts, which Mr. B. calls positive, delivered by Moses to the chosen tribes, that required in the subject a discriminating *moral qualification?* An institution *merely positive*, in regard to the subject, necessarily requires distinguishing marks in him of an *external* nature; a distinction that is sensible, circumstantial, not liable to misconstructions, and, in a word, infallibly characterized; otherwise, the choice of the subject, to whom the rite is to be applied, depends not upon *positive* rules, but *prudential* maxims, and *moral* considerations. Hence we may observe, that *those* rites were awfully guarded with temporal visible *penal sanctions*, which baptism is not. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that* BELIEVETH NOT, or rejects the Redeemer and his salvation, *shall be* DAMNED. The neglect of baptism, in proportion as it is a duty, is sinful; but it is guarded with no penal sanction. There appears another important reason why the Mosaic ritual was connected with external characters, as distinguished from moral ones, and also their being guarded by penal threats, and that is, their being *typical* of future blessings under the Messiah; but no gospel ordinance, strictly speaking, is a type. —On the whole, then, we may observe this remarkable difference between the institutions of the Old Testament and those of the New; the *former* referred, for instance, to persons of such a *sex* and *age*, as circumcision; to persons who had

had certain *marks* on their bodies, as the cure of the leproſy; to perſons who *touched* any thing declared to be unclean; to perſons who *uttered* certain words, as the blaſphemer; to perſons who committed certain *actions*, as the manſlayer; &c. —but the *latter* refer to *moral* qualities, to certain *diſpoſitions* of mind, to perſons in ſuch *circumſtances* as are anſwerable to the *end* and *deſign* of the inſtitutions, according to the judgment of the Adminiſtrator. Mr. B.'s reaſoning, therefore, is of no force when he argues, that becauſe the terms of the Moſaic ritual left nothing to be *inferred*, reſpecting the qualifications of the *ſubject*, therefore the ſame muſt hold in baptiſm; and his challenge is impertinent. To diſcard moral grounds from this controverſy, leads to this abſurdity, for it is the ſame as to ſay, that Chriſt gave a command to his miniſters, in executing which, no *reaſoning* or *inference* is at all neceſſary, and yet without this they are liable to perpetual miſtakes. It is like a ſovereign giving his repreſentative a *diſcretionary* commiſſion to treat with a foreign power, but every word of the treaty, he is told, is written and unalterably *fixed*, and muſt be taken in its ſtricteſt meaning. Which is the ſame as to ſay, The nature of your commiſſion neceſſarily requires ſome liberty and latitude, ſome diſcretionary power of determining certain points, which cannot poſſibly be included in theſe rules and this treaty, and yet you muſt not recede a hair's breadth from the particulars therein contained.

§ 25. If it be objected, (what indeed seems to me to be the only objection of any plausibility that can be urged) "that tho' our Lord has drawn no line in the command to determine *what degree* of instruction is necessary, yet according to the letter of the command *some degree* is requisite;" To this I reply, that *teaching*, in the present case, is of no further use than a *mean* to a moral end. Its *only use* seems to be to discover, produce, or promote a *moral qualification*. This is evident when we consider that if this important *end* is attained, the other is of course superseded; for whether the subject, on our opponents' principle, has been *taught* by another, or has profited, in a solitary way, by prayer and reading, &c. as a pre-requisite qualification, is quite immaterial. The subject *has already* attained to what is a necessary qualification, in the Antipædobaptist sense, and therefore teaching for *that end* is unnecessary. Which sufficiently shews the weakness and futility of forming an absolute and indispensible connexion between *teaching* and baptizing. The objection, therefore, is of no force, but on supposition that human teaching is a *necessary* mean, without which there can be no moral qualification, which is contrary to fact; for it is demonstrable from the concessions of our opponents, that many of the human race are *actually* in possession of that end, to attain which is the sole use of the teaching intended, who yet are not beholden to its aid. Nor can it be denied, that there are *other* means

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of information *beſide* what ariſe from the circumſtance of teaching, whereby we may conclude with *ſufficient* certainty, that is, with a certainty *equal* to what teaching can afford us, or equal to any *profeſſion* whatever, that certain perſons are in the *ſtate* of which a profeſſion, as the effect of teaching, is only an indication; except it be maintained that profeſſion is an *infallible* ſign, which is abſurd.

But ſhould any one ſtill inſiſt, that a competent knowledge of chriſtian principles, and a credible profeſſion are neceſſary; I aſk, what is the ſtandard of this *competency* or *credibility?* What poſitive rule can anſwer this purpoſe? And again, I aſk, *neceſſary for what?* If the reply be, to anſwer the nature and deſign of the inſtitution—it is evident this is only begging the queſtion, as I ſhall fully ſhew in the next chapter; where I hope alſo to demonſtrate, that there is nothing in the nature and deſign of baptiſm, but is *equally* applicable to the infant child of a believer as to himſelf, however eminent he may be in faith and piety. Upon the whole it appears, that teaching cannot be any way an *eſſential* qualification for baptiſm, and therefore is required in certain *circumſtances* only.

§ 26. From what has been ſaid it follows, that our opponents, if they act upon their avowed principles, are not only *liable* to commit ſin by baptizing an unqualified perſon, but do *inevitably* commit ſin, by renouncing and deſerting the real and only guide left to conduct us in the

path of duty. To baptize the *instructed* would be no duty, without attending to the *moral* circumstances of the instruction; and to perform what is *materially* right without an adequate rule, is *morally* an evil, or sinful. It is the observance of the design and reason, the moral purposes of the command, as it refers to teaching, and not the mere letter of it, that constitutes a teacher's duty. For of two ministers, keeping to the letter of the precept, in a manner equally strict, one may be performing the intention of the Lawgiver, and the other committing a sin. The office of teaching, therefore, is a discretionary office, to be measured by the *moral* design of the institution to which it refers. How absurd to argue thus: OMAI the savage is *taught* —the *Paternoster*—the ten commandments—the apostles' creed—therefore he should be baptized; however destitute of christian virtue and religion. Yet, on the principle I am opposing, this must be good logic.—Now, if we ought to *reject* some candidates for baptism who yet are taught, because not in a state that seems to comport with the design of the institution; we are at liberty, for the same reason, to *admit* others who appear in a condition suited to that design, tho' not taught, if upon inquiry any such should be found. Whether infants be of that number, will be considered in its proper place.

§ 27. (4) WHAT innumerable other absurdities would follow from that mode of interpreting scripture which Mr. B. contends for, even in reference

reference to the very commiſſion in queſtion! For inſtance, Whoſoever believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; Simon the ſorcerer believed and was baptized; therefore he is ſaved. He that believeth not ſhall be damned; infants believe not; therefore *(horribile dictu!)* they ſhall be damned. And *theſe ſigns* ſhall follow them that believe: in my name they ſhall caſt out devils; they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues; they ſhall take up ſerpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them; they ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover: but *theſe ſigns* have not followed for many ages back; therefore, during all that time, none have believed. Or, on the other hand, many have believed without *theſe ſigns* following; therefore, Chriſt is not true to his word.—Again, Jeſus ſpake nothing but in parables; but he ſpake the commiſſion to preach the goſpel and to baptize; therefore this commiſſion is a *parable*. The command is not only *teach all nations*, but preach the goſpel to *every creature*; (the latter being laſt written explaining the former;) but four-footed beaſts, fowls, and fiſhes, &c. are creatures; therefore it behoved the diſciples to preach to *theſe*. Again, *Paul* was not ſent to baptize, but to preach the goſpel; but he baptized *Criſpus* and *Gaius*, and the houſhold of *Stephanus*; therefore he did that which he was not ſent to do, or acted contrary to his commiſſion, and was blameworthy in baptizing them. How can ſuch a

ridiculous mode of reaſoning be confuted without *inferential* reaſoning?

§ 28. WILL any ſay, that there is no danger of running into ſuch ridiculous inconſiſtencies; that a very moderate ſhare of common ſenſe, a little ſober reaſon, a ſmall attention to the ſcope of a paſſage, and the analogy of faith, would prove a ſufficient barrier againſt the apprehended danger? Very true; this is all we deſire. But this is the very barrier which the Antipædobaptiſts would fain demoliſh. When Dr. S. profeſſedly inquires by what kind of proof we are to be determined in this controverſy, he ſays, "Here I would obſerve then, that all poſitive inſtitutions depend ſolely upon the will of the inſtitutor, and therefore *in every queſtion relating to them* we are to be guided by his expreſs declarations, or by thoſe of perſons he has duly authorized to ſignify his will.—Now this principle granted, I might very properly be excuſed conſidering the much greater part of Mr. A.'s book, which conſiſts of analogical reaſoning;—becauſe a *matter of this importance* in its own nature *requires* an expreſs poſitive declaration*." And Mr. ROBINSON is ſo well ſatisfied and pleaſed with this principle, (however repugnant in its genuine conſequences to that freedom of inquiry which on other occaſions he profeſſes and adopts, and for which he is reprehended by Mr. B. as inconſiſtent with himſelf †) that he looks upon it as a moſt formidable weapon employed againſt the

* Anſwer to A. p. 3, 6. † p. 462. Note.

the Pædobaptiſts; and publickly compliments his reverend brother, when he ſays, "Dr. STENNETT has given the *death wound* to Mr. A——'s arguments for infant baptiſm by this method §." But Mr. R. need not be informed that the warlike *Achilles* was not *invulnerable*, any more than the vaunting *Goliah*. And I am fully perſuaded that the *merely poſitive ſyſtem*, whatever gigantic and formidable appearance it hath made in the eyes of its votaries, and however loud and ſtrong its defiance, muſt fall at the feet of ſound reaſon and genuine analogy.—Mr. B. we may be ſure, is otherwiſe minded; "This maxim, ſays he, [of adhering to precepts and precedents] is a firm barrier againſt encroachments on the government of Chriſt, by princely domination, prieſtly pride, and popular unſteadineſs. It guards the throne of our aſcended ſovereign, and ſecures his honour as legiſlator in his own kingdom. This maxim duly obſerved, his diſciples treat, with equal contempt, the mandates of a pope and the edicts of a prince, the canons of a council and the ſtatutes of a parliament, whenever they preſume to appoint rites of divine worſhip, or to *alter thoſe which Chriſt ordained.*" In reading this paragraph and ſome others of the ſame complexion, I could not help ſmiling at the thought, how well it would ſuit *(mutatis mutandis)* a popiſh doctor in defending—*tranſubſtantiation!* In vain do Proteſtants wage war againſt this firſt-born of abſurdities, while it is

§ Notes on CLAUDE, Vol. II. p. 247.

defended by such a *firm barrier*. Entrenched in *this camp*, the catholics are secure; having *this* for their *guard*, no arguments can approach them; planting in front this *positive canon*, they defy every assault. In vain do we oppose to their maxim, common sense, the use of reason, moral considerations, the assistance of analogy; &c. for what has all this to do with a positive institution? "Let the subject of inquiry be *moral* truth, "or *moral* duty, may popish advocates reply, and "we admit inferential proof in as large an ex- "tent as any of our opposers; concluding, that "a *genuine* inference from a moral principle, "and relating to things of a moral nature, has "all the certainty of the principle itself.—But, "when a *positive* duty is under our notice;— "the case is greatly altered. For the inquiry "being intirely conversant about the *sovereign* "*pleasure* of God, concerning an article of hu- "man faith or duty, which absolutely depends "on a *manifestation* of the divine will; the na- "ture of the case forbids our expecting any "intelligence relating to it, except what arises "from divine revelation, precept, or scriptural "precedent. Such is the ordinance of the eu- "charist; such was the system of ritual appoint- "ments in former times; and such is the mystery "of *transubstantiation*, which is *essential* to the "aforesaid ordinance, as it is founded upon the "*plain words of institution*, THIS IS MY BODY. "Methinks they need but be read, and they must "produce conviction, if taken in their plain and "*proper*

" *proper* ſenſe. And that they are to be taken " in their *proper* ſenſe, in oppoſition to one that " is figurative, is apparent hence, for ſurely Chriſt " would ſpeak in the *plaineſt* manner to his diſ- " ciples, while his language is the *inſtitution* of " that ordinance; it is DIVINE LAW. And what " is very remarkable, St. PAUL received of the " Lord Jeſus, now aſcended to glory, what he " was to communicate to the churches as of " ſtanding obligation till the Lord come, a con- " firmation of the inſtitution in the ſelf ſame " words, *This* IS *my body*; whereby the cavils " of heretics are for ever confounded. 'Tis true, " *before* the conſecration it *was bread*; but *after* " that it was *his body*. And as to any *abſur-* " *dity* attending our interpretation, none can " be pretended by thoſe who admit, that the " Divine WORD *was made* FLESH; and other " goſpel myſteries equally remote from human " comprehenſion."

§ 29. MR. B. after quoting a paſſage from AINSWORTH'S *Arrow againſt Idolatry*, remarks; " By this abſtract of the maſterly mock apology which the famous Puritan makes for the conduct of Jeroboam — it appears — that the moſt deteſt- able corruptions of ritual worſhip admit of a plauſible defence, when managed by perſons of genius, if you do but allow them the privilege of arguing on *general* principles, as diſtinguiſh- ed from poſitive laws, and on ſuch paſſages of ſacred writ as are *foreign* to the ſubject in queſ- tion. It certainly behoves us, therefore, to be

exceedingly careful of deserting *positive law* and primitive example, when a ritual ordinance is under consideration; seeing this apology for Jeroboam defies the art of man to confute it, on any other ground *." What! cannot *Idolatry*, that superlatively detestable *moral evil*, be condemned on *moral* grounds? Would this abomination, this spiritual whoredom, this root of all evil, be an *innocent* thing, then, were it not *positively* prohibited? *Credat Judeus*. While the masterly pen of AINSWORTH describes *in mockery* the conduct of the idolatrous Jeroboam, on *general* grounds; the learned and eloquent pens of a numerous train of Romish doctors vindicate *in earnest* the doctrine of transubstantiation on POSITIVE ground; and I may with the greatest propriety add, " their apology defies the art of man to confute it," without the aids of inferential and moral reasoning; and that in the case of an institution *confessedly positive*.

A CERTAIN anonymous writer, who professes himself an enemy to the corruptions of Popery, after an appeal to *antiquity* and *universality*, to early *Fathers*, *Councils*, and *Liturgies*, in evidence that the practice of the church respecting the *eucharistick cup*, was to OFFER WINE MIXED WITH WATER, as best agreeing with the *original institution*; and having observed, that this is not the only *essential defect* the church of England is to be charged with in the commemoration of this great mystery, writes to his learned friend as follows: " Give me leave therefore to ask you in what

* P. 472.

what tolerable ſenſe we may be ſaid to retain this inſtitution of our Lord's, when we obſerve neither the *matter* nor the *form* of it? If it be anſwered, that we do retain the inſtitution, tho' maimed in ſome parts of it; I aſk again, whether, in a POSITIVE INSTITUTION, every part of it be not *equally neceſſary* to be obſerved, eſpecially when there is nothing in the nature of the things themſelves which can produce the effects, but all the benefits we receive thereby are derived to us upon account of our *exact conformity* to the will of him that inſtituted them? But again, if every part of a *poſitive inſtitution* be equally neceſſary, where is the power that can diſpenſe with our non-obſervance of the foregoing particulars? If there be ſuch a power, that power may diſpenſe with as many more particulars, and ſo on till the whole be taken away, and then it will follow, that *our Saviour inſtituted ſomething for a continual remembrance of his death, which might lawfully be taken away before his coming again.*" The reader ſhould obſerve, that the writer of the above, and the perſon addreſſed, both ſtood on the *merely poſitive ground*, and accordingly the *latter* ſo felt the force of the *former*'s reaſoning on their common principle, that he made the following ingenuous acknowledgment: "To this long objection &c. I muſt confeſs *I know not how to return a ſatisfactory anſwer* †." Here is a man honeſtly ſubmitting to the ſtrength and evidence of his own avowed principle, however

† BRETT's Divine Right, &c. Appendix. p. 189—191.

ever repugnant to *sound analogy* and the *genuine spirit* of the christian dispensation.

§ 30. The real fact is, that the path of truth is daily transgressed on either side. Some leave the line of duty so slack and entangled, that it proves of little or no use to guide; others draw it to such a *positive tightness*, that it breaks; they surely are best off who cautiously observe the golden mean.

There is, no doubt, in the divine dispensations, an admirable *analogy* observable, an analogy established and confirmed by uncontested *facts*; nor should we quit the clue afforded by the former, in theological as well as philosophical subjects, but when obliged to do so by the latter. The Supreme Being observes in the works of creation and providence, in the revolutions of states, the rise and fall of empires, and the successive dispensations of religion, respectively, a wonderful *proportion*; and who can deny that a due attention to the same, as explained by facts, eminently distinguishes a wise politician from a weak patriot, or a judicious christian from an enthusiastick bigot. Among the extravagancies of the latter, of which the christian world furnishes too many instances, not a few are established and supported by the pretended aids of analogical reasoning, while others are beholden to the abused patronage of positive laws. But the real parent of the former is not sober and just *analogy*, but rather a kind of *anomaly*; and that of the latter *anomy* of lawless breed.

§ 31.

§ 31. (1) BEFORE I cloſe this part of my ſubject, I ſhall take notice of ſome *objections* that may be made, beſide thoſe already anticipated, to what has been delivered in the preceding pages, whether in itſelf or in its conſequences. And, firſt, it may be objected, "If the preceding account be true, that baptiſm is not an inſtitution *merely poſitive*, as much ſo as any enacted under the Moſaic diſpenſation, then the preſent œconomy hath no inſtitutions at all of that kind." This objection ſuppoſes,

1. THAT precepts of a poſitive nature under the Moſaic diſpenſation, were abſolutely ſo in all their circumſtances; ſo as not to leave any thing to be inferred by the perſon or perſons concerned, in the diſcharge of the duty enjoined.—But if theſe things were ſo, if the Jewiſh ritual was ſo expreſs as to leave nothing to be determined by inference, one might well wonder whence could ſpring ſo many *Targums* and *Talmuds*, ſo many voluminous works intended to explain and illuſtrate the various circumſtances attending the performance of theſe *poſitive duties* among others. Are not theſe *unprefcribed circumſtances* of ritual worſhip, and other poſitive injunctions, what in a great degree ſwell the interpretations of the *Rabbins?*—The truth is, that there were many precepts under the Jewiſh œconomy poſitive in a *conſiderable degree*, relative to the *ſubject* as well as the mode of an inſtitute, and reſpecting the former, it was ſometimes particularly ſcrupulous, for reaſons already aſſigned (§ 24.); but it does not

not follow that ANY ONE of these were so strictly positive, as not to take some things for *granted* respecting the circumstances of the duty, such as national custom, the common dictates of sense and reason, traditionary knowledge, the general principles of the law of nature, &c. And it should not be forgotten, that the administratior of the Jewish rites had the subjects distinguished and characterized in a *sensible manner*, which qualification was to be determined by the same sort of evidence as any *facts* in common life; but the administrator of the Christian rites has no such grounds to proceed on; his commission is of a *discretionary* nature, arising from the nature and design of the institutions themselves, as before shewn (§ 23.)

2. THE objection again supposes, that there is some *excellency* in an institution being merely and absolutely positive, more than in one of a mixed nature. But this supposition is vain and erroneous. For what conceivable superior excellency can there be in any precept or duty on account of its *positiveness?* Were there any force in the objection, it would imply that the Christian dispensation is *less excellent* than the Mosaic; as having fewer positive rites, and their proportion of positiveness being also smaller. And it would also imply, that the reasonable duties of prayer and praise, as founded on the law of nature, as well as more fully enjoined by revelation, were *less excellent* than baptism and the Lord's supper; and it would follow, that the services of the church

church triumphant are in their own nature *leſs excellent* than thoſe of the church militant; which are conſequences from the force of the objection equally genuine and abſurd. Our Lord's anſwer reſpecting the firſt and great commandment, ſhews at once that what is the moſt *important* duty, is alſo the moſt *natural*, and therefore the moſt remote from what is merely poſitive; and that is the *love of God*. This matter has been fully ſhewn before. (§) In one word, the ſpirit of the objection is truly phariſaic.

§ 32. (2) SOME may perhaps object, "that this has been always admitted as true, that baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper are poſitive inſtitutions of the New Teſtament; and that many Pædobaptiſts have availed themſelves of this fort, in aſcertaining the nature and enforcing the obligation of the latter, and particularly Bp. HOADLY. And as his Lordſhip's principle, in his *Plain Account of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, has been deemed unanſwerable, Mr. FOOT, Dr. STENNETT, and others, have taken but the ſame method in treating about baptiſm." To this I reply,

THAT, as principles taken upon truſt, dignified titles, and lawn ſleeves, are light as a feather in the ſcale of argument; ſo, on the other hand, I am ſatisfied the Biſhop of Wincheſter's poſitions, taken in a ſound ſenſe, nay, the *only* conſiſtent ſenſe in which they can be taken, are evidently true and important. The ſum is this; "That all poſitive duties, or duties made ſuch by inſtitution

inſtitution alone, depend intirely upon the will and declaration of the perſon who inſtitutes or ordains them, with reſpect to the real deſign and end of them, and conſequently, to the due manner of performing them." This is ſtrictly true, *in the degree that any duties are poſitive*, but no further. And to denominate a precept or duty *poſitive*, tho' but *partially* ſo, I have no objection, for the ſake of diſtinguiſhing them from ſuch as are merely moral, and evidently founded on the reaſon and nature of things. "Except we obſerve this caution," as Bp. BUTLER obſerves, "we ſhall be in danger of running into endleſs confuſion."

§ 33. (3) It may be ſaid, "If we reſign this maxim, that a poſitive precept or duty excludes all moral reaſoning, analogy and inference, we open a door to numberleſs innovations, and deprive ourſelves of a neceſſary barrier againſt the encroachments of popery, &c. *" In reply to this ſpecious objection let it be obſerved,

1. That this maxim, whatever confidence our opponents place in it, is a very *inſufficient* barrier for the defence of truth, if the objection implies, that it is calculated to defend truth againſt error, and not error againſt truth as well. For it is notorious, that there is hardly any extravagance, in the whole compaſs of the diſtinguiſhing peculiarities of religious practice, that is not barricadoed by this very maxim. If *Proteſtants* uſe it againſt Papiſts, *Papiſts* in their turn uſe it againſt Proteſtants.

* Thus Mr. B. p. 190, 443, &c.

Proteſtants. If the *Quakers* are purſued and foiled when they occaſionally quit this fort, they ſoon rally their controverſial forces, and, entrenching themſelves behind the ſtrength of this maxim, the *warleſs race* becomes again *victorious*. Whence paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance? Whence an oppoſition to all *forenſic* ſwearing, in common with profane? Whence the Quakers' nonconformity to what other ſerious chriſtians conſider as lawful? Their peculiar mode of ſalutation and addreſs? Their method of conducting religious worſhip? The little ſtreſs they lay on the obſervance of the chriſtian Sabbath? &c. Whence the popiſh abſurd figment of tranſubſtantiation *, apoſtolical ſucceſſion †, extreme unction? &c. —— On the contrary,

2. Nor to diſtinguiſh between the *poſitiveneſs* and *morality* of a precept, ordinance or duty, and not to aſcertain their reſpective *degrees*; and to deny that the *latter* diſtinction admits of moral reaſoning, inference and analogy, open a wide door to *bigotry*, and numberleſs glaring abuſes of the ſacred oracles. By rejecting the analogy of faith and the *deſign* of ſcripture herein, we give the moſt effectual encouragement to every ſenſeleſs intruſion. And what is ſtill more remarkable is, that the *more firmly* any one adheres to the undiſtinguiſhing poſitive ſcheme, in reference to any chriſtian ordinance whatever, the more cloſely will he be allied to the intereſt of genuine bigotry. For it has a direct tendency

* See § 28. † See § 21.

dency to make the unprescribed circumstances of a positive rite, *essential* to the rite itself, and consequently to make that necessary and essential which the institutor has not made so. How far this is applicable to the Antipædobaptist's cause, will be further considered.—The doctrine that teaches the propriety of yielding our reason to positive institutions *as such*, or in the *degree* they are so, is just and proper, as founded on the sovereign, absolute and manifest authority of the Supreme Legislator; and in this view it has been of singular service in refuting the cavils of deistical impiety. But to carry the principle any further, tends to betray the cause of christianity into the hands of infidels, and to breed unhallowed party zeal and uncharitable animosities among its sincerest professors. "For who are most likely to put weapons into the hands of *infidels*; they, who seem to discard *reason* in the investigation of truth, or they, whose researches are founded on her most vigorous exertions, and most rational decisions?—They, who make scripture bow to their preconceived notions, in direct opposition to the dictates of reason and common sense, or they, whose arguments are founded on a *coalition* of scripture and right reason †?" Once more,

3. The objection, as it includes Mr. B.'s favourite maxim, and tends to oppose the distinction above stated, involves a great inconsistence with itself. For on what principle, except what they

† De Courcy's Rejoinder, p. 252.

they affect to diſcard, do our opponents retain *ſome* of the poſitive rites of the New Teſtament and reject *others?* Why regard *baptiſm* and the *euchariſt* as of ſtanding obligation; while the *pedilavium* and *feaſts of charity* (the *former* injoined expreſsly by our Lord, and *both* practiſed by the diſciples of the apoſtolic age, ſee John xiii. 14, 15. 1 Tim. v. 10. Jude 12.) are judged unworthy of continuance? Why receive *females* to communion, or adopt the *firſt* day of the week for the chriſtian ſabbath? How can they juſtify their conduct in theſe matters, theſe circumſtances of *poſitive* inſtitutions, without undermining their own avowed hypotheſis? With regard to the ſabbath, indeed, the Antipædobaptiſts are divided among themſelves; while ſome are content with the *firſt* day of the week, others obſerve the *ſeventh*. On this point Dr. S. is very open and ingenuous; Mr. ADDINGTON appeals to an objecting Antipædobaptiſt, "whether he does not think himſelf ſufficiently authorized to keep the chriſtian ſabbath, tho' Chriſt has no where ſaid in ſo many words, *Remember the firſt day of the week to keep it holy*‖?" To this the Dr. replies, "There is, I acknowledge, ſome weight in this "objection: and all I can ſay to it is, that not "having yet met with any paſſage in the New "Teſtament that appears to me to have re-"pealed the fourth commandment, and to have "required the obſervation of the firſt day, I "cannot think myſelf ſufficiently authorized to "renounce

‖ The Chriſtian Miniſter's Reaſons, &c. p. 143.

" renounce that, and to keep this †." If the Doctor is professedly an observer of the Jewish sabbath, he is consistent with himself, however different from so great a part of the christian world; if *not*, he and his tenet are at variance; analogy and inferential reasoning have got the better of the positive system, which nevertheless must not be resigned, for fear of worse consequences.

§ 34. (4) ANOTHER objection much insisted on is, " If our Lord has left any thing to be *inferred* relative to the *subject* and *mode* of baptism, being a positive institute; or if he has not delivered himself *expressly* and *clearly* in every thing, respecting the question *who* are to be baptized, and the manner *how*; it implies a reflexion on his wisdom and goodness." But this objection is impertinent on different accounts. For,

1. ITS force is derived from the supposition that the Institutor was somehow *obliged* to make his will known to men by *one* method only. But is the Great Supreme under any such obligations to his absolutely dependent creatures? What should we say of a philosopher, who, having to judge of any important phenomenon in physicks, should quarrel with the author of nature, because he had not confined his method of information to *one* source only, to the exclusion of all others? That his evidence, for instance, was not confined to the information of *sense*, to the exclusion of *reason* and *analogy?*

† Answer to A. p. 177.

analogy? Or what ſhould we ſay of a perſon, who having to decide on the truth and reality of a miracle, ſhould impeach the wiſdom and goodneſs of his Maker, becauſe he did not appeal to *one* ſenſe only of his dependent and unworthy creatures, that of *ſeeing*, for inſtance, to the excluſion of that of *hearing?* The anſwer is plain, and the application eaſy.

2. THE objection is guilty of another impertinence, nearly allied to the former: it unreaſonably requires *poſitive* evidence for what is diſcoverable by *other* means. It is demonſtrable, and I think has been demonſtrated, that the qualifications of the ſubjects of baptiſm (the *mode* alſo will be examined in its place) is what cannot poſſibly be determined by any poſitive rule whatever as ſuch, but muſt be reſolved to the *diſcretionary* nature of the commiſſion, or the ſuppoſed *wiſdom* and *prudence* of the adminiſtrators, in common with other parts of the ſame commiſſion, ſuch as the choice of an *audience*, the choice of a concionatory *ſubject*, &c. Preach the *goſpel* to *every creature*, is a part of the commiſſion, but the execution has no *poſitive* rule. Nor does this commiſſion of preaching the *goſpel* prohibit preaching the *law*, for a lawful uſe, or any branch of natural religion, notwithſtanding Mr. B.'s excluding ſtandard, that "poſitive laws imply their negatives." In like manner, the commiſſion to baptize *believers*, and the *taught*, we contend and prove, does not mean to include *all ſorts* of believers and taught perſons,

persons, but such of them as the administrators judge fit, according to the rules of christian prudence and discretion. And we further insist, as shall be more fully shewn hereafter, that the terms of the commission, *believers* and *taught*, stand *opposed*, not to *non-believers* and *untaught*, but to *unbelievers* and persons *perversely ignorant*. What, therefore, falls *necessarily* to the province of inferential reasoning, is impertinently referred to a positive standard.

3. The objection implies an *ungrateful* reflexion on the Institutor's wisdom and goodness, contrary to what it pretends to avoid. And this it does, by counteracting and vilifying those natural dictates of reason, prudence and common sense, that our all-wise and beneficent Creator has given us — his *goodness*, in not suspending their operations, but leaving them in full force, as to these circumstances of positive duties — his *wisdom*, in grafting what is positive of his laws on these common principles — and, finally, the favourable circumstance of his diminishing the degree of positiveness in New Testament institutions, as well as their number.

§ 35. Let us now recapitulate what has been said in this chapter. — From an investigation of the *nature* of positive precepts and duties, as distinguished from *moral* ones, together with their *comparative* obligations and importance, we have seen, that, in any case of supposed competition, the *latter* claims an undoubted *preference*. We have also seen, that nothing but absolute, decisive

ſive, *diſcernible authority* can turn the ſcale in favour of the *former*, or, indeed, place any law or duty in the rank of POSITIVE. Moreover, it has been ſhewn, that every duty reſulting from any diſcernible *moral relation*, muſt needs be claſſed among *moral duties*; that ſome things appertaining to the very *eſſence* of baptiſm, on our opponents' own principles, are of moral conſideration; particularly the qualifications of proper ſubjects; conſequently, that baptiſm is an ordinance of a *mixed nature*, partly poſitive and partly moral. Of all which an unavoidable conſequence is, that our opponents' outcry againſt all *moral* and *analogical reaſons* in our inquiries reſpecting the ſubjects and mode of baptiſm, is impertinent and abſurd, and to a demonſtration contradictory to their own avowed principles.—The moſt material, I believe, of the *objections* that may be urged againſt my principles, have been anſwered. And this I can ſincerely aver, that I have not intentionally concealed one objection, that has been or may be advanced, on account of any apprehended force therein. On the contrary, I have purpoſely and ſtudiouſly ſought out what appeared to me the *moſt forcible*. And I am ſatisfied that no objection *can be* fairly made, which is not capable of a fair and full anſwer, and which will not eventually contribute to illuſtrate and eſtabliſh what I here contend for.

HAVING now fixed upon the ſpot, cleared

the rubbish, and laid the foundation, I proceed to the superstructure, and first of all to investigate the *Nature and Design* of the baptismal rite.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the Nature and Design of baptism; containing an account of the facts, blessings, and obligations represented by it, impartially deduced from all the passages in the New Testament relating to it.

§ 1. *The best method to find the nature and design of baptism.* § 2—7. (1) *Those passages of scripture that speak of baptism in direct terms.* § 8. (2) *Those that are supposed to allude to this ordinance.* § 9. *Axioms of interpretation.* § 10—12. (1) *The difference between the baptism of John and that of Christ.* § 13. (2) *Their agreement.* § 14. *The general nature of baptism.* § 15—17. (1) *The blessings exhibited by it.* § 18—21. (2) *Obligations resulting from it.* § 22. *General conclusions*; (1) *baptism obliges to some duties, and exhibits some benefits not expressly mentioned in scripture*; *benefits and obligations being correlates.* § 23—35. (2) *The propriety of denominating baptism a seal of the covenant.* § 36. *And of consequence the Lord's Supper.* § 37. (3) *The unworthiness of minister or subject does not nullify the ordinance.* § 38. (4) *To renounce infant baptism, as such, by a desire of rebaptizing, militates against the very*

nature and deſign of the ordinance. § 39. (5) *It is not neceſſarily attended with ſpiritual communications.* § 40—42. (6) *The death, burial, and reſurrection of Chriſt, not the principal facts repreſented by baptiſm.*

§ 1. THO' I have ſaid ſo much in vindication of inferential proof and juſt analogy, in controverſial debates about inſtitutions *partially* poſitive, as baptiſm is ſhewn to be; I am far from deſiring to evade the force of *any thing* recorded in the New Teſtament relative to this ordinance: on the contrary, the rules laid down in the preceding chapter require that we ſhould very carefully attend to *revealed facts* before all other conſiderations, as all reaſonings that may contradict theſe muſt needs be falſe and impertinent. It would be ridiculous to borrow the aids of analogy, while inveſtigating any ſubject whatever, in *oppoſition* to plain facts. For as an hypotheſis in philoſophy is juſtly exploded, when the ſyſtem-maker, in whoſe brain it was fabricated, forcibly drags all phenomena into its vortex, in defiance of well atteſted obſervations and experiments; ſo that ſyſtem in divinity, whether it comprehends the whole body of it, or any particular part, muſt needs be precarious and vain when it *contradicts* revealed inconteſtible facts. And it is no leſs evident, that the pretenſions of any hypotheſis muſt be equally futile in proportion as it is *inconſiſtent* with itſelf. To avoid theſe inconveniences

ences I know of no better method, in general, than that which an ingenious writer on this subject has adopted, in a small treatise which he calls, *A Plain Account of the Ordinance of Baptism**; and that is, to lay together all the texts in the *New Testament* relating to it; that from these, as so many *data*, we may deduce the nature and design of the institution, and learn every thing else that the institutor hath been pleased to *reveal* concerning it. And this method I the rather adopt, not only because it is proper and rational in itself, but likewise cannot be objected to consistently by any of our opponents. The Author of the *Plain Account* produces *first* the passages concerning John's baptism, and *secondly* those that refer to Christ's baptism; and inserts promiscuously those passages that only *allude* to the baptismal rite. I shall attempt, however, a slight improvement of his arrangement, by placing *first* all the passages in the *New Testament* that speak of BAPTISM in direct terms and in whatever connection; and *secondly* those texts that are supposed to *allude* to the institution. This I think is less exceptionable, since the classing of the texts in the manner he does, seems to imply an essential difference between the baptism of John and that of Christ, as a circumstance taken for granted, before the inquiry is made.

* Anonymous, but generally ascribed to Mr. FOOT, of Bristol; addressed to Bp. HOADLEY, in a series of Letters.

§ 2. (1) LET us begin with thoſe paſſages that ſpeak of BAPTISM in direct terms and in whatever connection. Mat. iii. 5—7. Then went out to him Jeruſalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were *baptized* of him in Jordan, confeſſing their ſins. But when he ſaw many of the Phariſees and Sadducees come to his *baptiſm* he ſaid unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?—*v.* 11. I indeed *baptize* you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear; he ſhall *baptize* you with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire.—*v.* 13—16. Then cometh Jeſus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be *baptized* of him. But John forbad him ſaying, I have need to be *baptized* of thee, and comeſt thou to me? And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto him, ſuffer it to be ſo now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs. Then he ſuffered him. And Jeſus when he was *baptized* went up ſtraightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending like a dove and lighting upon him.—Chap. xx. 22, 23. But Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Ye know not what ye aſk. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I ſhall drink of, and to be *baptized* with the *baptiſm* that I am *baptized* with? They ſaid unto him, We are able. And he ſaith unto them, Ye ſhall indeed drink of my cup, and be *baptized* with the *baptiſm* that I am

am *baptized* with; but to ſit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it ſhall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my father.—Chap. xxi. 25. The *baptiſm* of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From heaven; he will ſay unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?—Chap. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.

§ 3. MARK i. 4, 5. John did *baptize* in the wilderneſs, and preach the *baptiſm* of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jeruſalem, and were all *baptized* of him in the river of Jordan confeſſing their ſins.—*v.* 8—10. I indeed have *baptized* you with water; but he ſhall *baptize* you with the Holy Ghoſt. And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that Jeſus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was *baptized* of John in Jordan. And ſtraightway coming up out of the water, he ſaw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove deſcending upon him. —Chap. vii. 4. And when they come from the market, except they waſh, [Greek, *baptize*,] they eat not; and many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the waſhing [Greek, *baptizing*,] of cups and pots, and of braſen veſſels and tables.—Chap. xi. 30. The *baptiſm* of John, was it from heaven or of men? anſwer me.—Chap. xvi. 15, 16. And he ſaid

unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature; he that believeth and is *baptized* ſhall be ſaved.

§ 4. LUKE iii. 3. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the *baptiſm* of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins.—*v.* 7, 8. Then ſaid he to the multitude that came forth to be *baptized* of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?—*v.* 12—14. Then came alſo publicans to be *baptized*, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, what ſhall we do? And he ſaid unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the ſoldiers likewiſe demanded of him, ſaying, And what ſhall we do? And he ſaid unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuſe any falſely; and be content with your wages.—*v.* 16. John anſwered, ſaying to them all, I indeed *baptize* you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to unlooſe; he ſhall *baptize* you with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire.—*v.* 21, 22. Now when all the people were *baptized*, it came to paſs that Jeſus alſo being *baptized*, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcended in a bodily ſhape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven which ſaid, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleaſed.—Chap. vii. 29, 30. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, juſtified God, being *baptized* with the *baptiſm* of John. But the Phariſees and lawyers rejected the counſel of God

God againſt themſelves, being not *baptized* of him. —Chap xi. 38. And when the Phariſee ſaw it, he marvelled that he had not firſt waſhed [Gr. *baptized*] before dinner.—Chap. xii. 50. But I have a *baptiſm* to be *baptized* with, and how am I ſtraitened till it be accompliſhed!—Chap. xx. 4. The *baptiſm* of John, was it from heaven or of men?

§ 5. JOHN i. 25, 26. And they aſked him, and ſent unto him, Why *baptizeſt* thou then, if thou be not that Chriſt, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John anſwered them, ſaying, I *baptize* with water.—*v.* 28. Theſe things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was *baptizing*—*v.* 31. And I knew him not; but that he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael, therefore am I come *baptizing* with water.—*v.* 33.—He that ſent me to *baptize* with water, the ſame ſaid unto me, upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending and remaining on him, the ſame is he which *baptizeth* with the Holy Ghoſt. —Chap. iii. 22, 23. After theſe things came Jeſus and his diſciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them and *baptized*. And John alſo was *baptizing* in Enon, near to Salim; becauſe there was much water there; and they came and were *baptized*.—*v.* 26. And they came unto John and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bareſt witneſs, behold the ſame *baptizeth*, and all men come to him.—Chap. iv. 1, 2. When therefore the Lord knew how the Phariſees had heard that Jeſus made and *baptized* more diſciples than John, (tho' Jeſus himſelf

baptized not, but his diſciples).—Chap. x. 40. And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at firſt *baptized*; and there he abode.

§ 6. Acts i. 5. For John truly *baptized* with water; but ye ſhall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghoſt not many days hence.—*v.* 22. Beginning from the *baptiſm* of John, unto that ſame day that he was taken up from us.—Chap. ii. 38, 39. Then Peter ſaid unto them, Repent and be *baptized* every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt for the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. For the promiſe is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.—*v.* 41. Then they that gladly received his word were *baptized*; and the ſame day there were added unto them about three thouſand ſouls.—Chap. viii. 12—17. But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jeſus Chriſt, they were *baptized* both men and women. Then Simon himſelf believed alſo; and when he was *baptized*, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and ſigns that were done. Now when the Apoſtles which were at Jeruſalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they ſent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghoſt. For as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were

baptized

baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.—*v.* 36—38. And as they went on their way they came unto a certain water. And the Eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be *baptized?* And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still. And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he *baptized* him.—Chap. ix. 18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was *baptized.* Chap. x. 37, 38.—That word (I say) you know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the *baptism* which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, &c.—*v.* 47, 48. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be *baptized*, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we? And he commanded them to be *baptized* in the name of the Lord.—Chap. xi. 15, 16. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed *baptized* with water; but ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost.—Chap. xiii. 23—25. Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: When John had first preached

before his coming, the *baptiſm* of repentance to all the people of Iſrael. And as John fulfilled his courſe, he ſaid, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he.—Chap. xvi. 15. And when ſhe [Lydia] was *baptized*, and her houſehold, ſhe beſought us, &c.—*v.* 33. And he [the jailor] took them the ſame hour of the night, and waſhed their ſtripes; and was *baptized*, he and all his, ſtraightway.—Chap. xviii. 8. And Criſpus the chief ruler of the ſynagogue, believed on the Lord with all his houſe; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were *baptized*.—*v.* 25.—He [Apollos] ſpake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the *baptiſm* of John.—Chap. xix. 3—5. And he ſaid unto them, Unto what then were ye *baptized?* And they ſaid, Unto John's *baptiſm*. Then ſaid Paul, John verily *baptized* with the *baptiſm* of repentance, ſaying unto the people, that they ſhould believe on him which ſhould come after him, that is, on Chriſt Jeſus. When they heard this, they were *baptized* in the name of the Lord Jeſus.—Chap. xxii. 16. And now why tarrieſt thou? Ariſe and be *baptized*, and waſh away thy ſins, calling on the name of the Lord.

§ 7. Rom. vi. 3, 4. Know ye not, that ſo many of us as were *baptized* into Jeſus Chriſt, were *baptized* into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by *baptiſm* into death; that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in

in newneſs of life.—1 Cor. i. 13—17. Were ye *baptized* in the name of Paul? I thank God that I *baptized* none of you, but Criſpus and Gaius; leſt any ſhould ſay, that I had *baptized* in mine own name. And I *baptized* alſo the houſehold of Stephanas; beſides, I know not whether I *baptized* any other; for Chriſt ſent me not to *baptize*, but to preach the goſpel.—Chap. x. 2. And were all *baptized* unto Moſes in the cloud and in the ſea.—Chap. xii. 13. For by one Spirit are we all *baptized* into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one ſpirit.—Chap. xv. 29. Elſe what ſhall they do, that are *baptized* for the dead, if the dead riſe not at all? Why are they then *baptized* for the dead?—Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have been *baptized* into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.—Epheſ. iv. 5. One *baptiſm*.—Col. ii. 12. Buried with him in *baptiſm*, wherein alſo ye are riſen with him.—Heb. vi. 2. The doctrine of *baptiſms*.—Chap. ix. 10. Which ſtood only in meats, and drinks, and divers waſhings [Greek *baptiſms*] and carnal ordinances impoſed on them until the time of reformation.—1 Pet. iii. 21. The like figure whereunto, even *baptiſm*, doth alſo now ſave us (not the putting away the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God) by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.—Rev. xix. 13. And he was clothed with a veſture dipt in [Gr. *baptized* in or with] blood.

§ 8.

§ 8. (2) I SHALL now produce thoſe paſſages that are ſuppoſed to *allude* to the ordinance of baptiſm, tho' the *term* be not uſed. John iii. 5. Except a man be born of *water* and of the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. —*v.* 25. Then there aroſe a queſtion between ſome of John's diſciples and the Jews, about *purifying*.—2 Cor. vi. 11. But ye are *waſhed*.—Eph. v. 26. That he might ſanctify and cleanſe it, with the *waſhing of water*, by the word.—Tit. iii. 5. According to his mercy he ſaved us, by the *waſhing* of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.—Heb. x. 22. Our bodies *waſhed* with pure water.—1 Pet. i. 9. And hath forgotten that he was *purged* from his old ſins.—Rev. i. 5.—Unto him that loved us, and *waſhed* us from our ſins in his own blood.——Perhaps the following texts, and ſome others, allude to the chriſtian purification. Tit. ii. 14.—And *purify* to himſelf a peculiar people.—James iv. 8.—Cleanſe your hands, ye ſinners, and *purify* your hearts, ye double minded.—1 Pet. i. 22.—Seeing ye have *purified* your ſouls in obeying.—2 Cor. vii. 1.—Let us *cleanſe* ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit.—1 John i. 7. The blood of Jeſus Chriſt *cleanſeth* us from all ſin. *v.* 9.—To *cleanſe* us from all unrighteouſneſs.—May I not add? Acts ii. 33.—Having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath *ſhed* forth this, which ye now ſee and hear.—Rom. v. 5. The love of God is *ſhed* in your hearts by the Holy Ghoſt.—Tit. iii. 6.

iii. 6. Which he *ſhed* on us abundantly thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.—Acts x. 45.—On the Gentiles alſo was *poured* out the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. &c.

§ 9. BEFORE I proceed to conſider theſe paſſages, I would propoſe the following remarks as axioms of interpretation.

1. EVERY one of theſe texts, ſeperately, conſidered in its proper connection, muſt have one principal deſign and determinate meaning.

2. As they all proceed from the ſame infallible ſource, they muſt have one general meaning, collectively, in which they all agree.

3. THAT cannot be the deſign and meaning of any particular text which is *contrary* to this general deſign, or even contrary to any other paſſage which is more evident than itſelf.

4. THAT is to be deemed the general meaning of theſe paſſages, and their true interpretation, which moſt unexceptionably harmonizes with the whole revealed will of God, which is ever conſiſtent with itſelf.

5. As the law of nature, viz. That rule of action which derives its being from the *nature* of God and man, and the *relation* thence ariſing, was never ſuperſeded as uſeleſs under any diſpenſation of religion; but on the contrary always remained in force, and ever will remain; no interpretation of theſe texts, or indeed any other, ſhould be admitted as true, which *ſeems* to offer violence to this law of nature, otherwiſe called the moral law, except it be ſupported by the

the clear, indubitable, poſitive authority of God. The reaſon is evident; for as this law of nature is always binding in every part of the globe, and thro' every period of time; whatever appears to be *probably* conformable to it, or a faithful dictate of it, every man is laid under a proportionable obligation to obey its voice; until an infallible authority interpoſes, uſhered in with *ſtronger evidence* againſt the former ſuppoſed probability, from whoſe deciſive verdict there lies no appeal. This I the rather inſiſt upon, becauſe it may ſerve to explain the genuine meaning of a maxim on which Mr. B. lays conſiderable ſtreſs, viz. "Poſitive laws imply their negative*." Poſitive duties as far as, or in the reſpect that they are *poſitive*, that is, having no apparent reaſon to recommend them but the *mere authority* of the Lawgiver, imply their negatives, for this reaſon, that no law whatever, on the ſuppoſition, enjoins theſe negatives. Not the *natural* or moral law, for then they would not be ranked among poſitive duties: not any *poſitive* law, for then the term *negative* would be inapplicable. On the contrary, whatever appears, upon the whole, a *moral* duty, cannot with any propriety be termed the *negative* of any poſitive duty.

§ 10. (1) I SHALL now make ſome obſervations on the foregoing texts. And it is obvious, in the firſt place, that there is ſome *difference* between the baptiſm of John and that of Chriſt and his Apoſtles.

1. THE

* p. 187.

1. THE immediate *Inſtitutor* of John's baptiſm was God the *Father*. John i. 33. HE that ſent me to baptize with water, the SAME ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the *Spirit* deſcending and remaining on him, the ſame is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghoſt. Here we ſee that He who ſent John to baptize was a divine Perſon diſtinct from the Son and Spirit; who muſt be therefore the Father.—But the immediate *Inſtitutor* of the Chriſtian baptiſm, which is of perpetual obligation, is Chriſt the *Son* of God. John iii. 22. After theſe things came Jeſus and his diſciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them and baptized. *v.* 26. And they came unto John and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan to whom thou bareſt witneſs, behold the ſame baptizeth, and all men come to him; &c. Mat. xxviii. 19. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them &c. From theſe paſſages we obſerve, that Chriſt was the *Inſtitutor* of baptiſm *before* his death; and more explicitly before his aſcenſion.

2. JOHN'S baptiſm was a *preparatory* rite, referring the ſubjects to Chriſt, who was about to confer upon them ſpiritual bleſſings. Mat. iii. 11. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear; he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire. Mark i. 8. I indeed have baptized you with water; but he ſhall baptize you with the

the Holy Ghoſt. Luke iii. 16. John anſwered, ſaying to them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to unlooſe; he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire. John i. 31. And I knew him not, but that he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael, *therefore* am I come baptizing with water. Acts i. 5. For John truly baptized with water, but ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt not many days hence. Chap. xix. 4. Then ſaid Paul, John verily baptized with the baptiſm of repentance, ſaying unto the people, that they ſhould believe on him which ſhould come after him, that is, on Chriſt Jeſus, &c.—The Chriſtian baptiſm was an actual *initiation* into the Meſſiah's viſible kingdom. Acts ii. 41. Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized; and the ſame day there were ADDED unto them about three thouſand ſouls.—This *addition* was to the number of the *diſciples*, and *ſubjects* of Chriſt; for *then*, when they were *baptized*, were they reckoned among his followers.—The baptiſm of John did not actually introduce any into the goſpel kingdom, or make them diſciples of Chriſt; but thoſe whom John baptized were properly his own diſciples, and expectants of the Meſſiah's bleſſings. Whereas thoſe whom Jeſus ordered to be baptized, were ſtrictly *his* diſciples, and were taught to expect the promiſe of the Spirit, in his various gifts and graces.

3. It

3. It appears from the texts firſt recited, that the baptiſm of John was confined to the *Jews*, and temporary; Mat. iii. 5—7. &c.—But the Chriſtian baptiſm was common to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and of ſtanding obligation. John iii. 26. The ſame baptizeth, and *all men* come unto him. Mat. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15, 16. &c.

4. It does not appear that John had any *formula* of adminiſtration; nor, indeed, have we any account of his *commiſſion*, but what may be inferred from what he ſays John i. 33. He that SENT me to baptize with water. And we may further infer that his baptiſm was FROM HEAVEN, from what our Lord ſays to the chief prieſts and elders of the people, Mat. xxi. 25. &c.—Whence it appears that he was *divinely* authorized, and, as before obſerved, that the *Father* was the Inſtitutor.—But the Chriſtian baptiſm has a *formula* of adminiſtration. Mat. xxviii. 19. IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.—And ſtill ſhorter, Acts ii. 31. Be baptized every one of you IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST. Alſo Chap. x. 38. IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.

5. It may be added, that the baptiſm of John was the concluding ſcene of the *legal* diſpenſation, and in fact part of it. Hence the leaſt in the kingdom of God, *viz.* the goſpel kingdom, was greater than he. It may be conſidered as a final and general purification, performed by John as the laſt prieſt. That he diſcharged his office as a purifying prieſt to the thouſands

thouſands of Iſrael, ſee Acts xiii. 23—25. Thus John went before Jeſus in the ſpirit and power of Elias (as promiſed Mal. iv. 5.) to turn the hearts of the fathers with the children to him, and the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. See Luke i. 17.—Chriſtian baptiſm is the regular entrance into and is a part of the *evangelical* diſpenſation. Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt, &c.

6. It does not appear from the inſpired narrative (however probable from inferential reaſoning) that any but John *himſelf* was engaged as operator in his baptiſm; whereas Chriſt himſelf baptized none, but his *diſciples* by his authority and in his name. John iv. 2.

§ 11. Some have ſuppoſed another diſtinction between the baptiſm of John and that of Chriſt, viz. That the *latter* had an immediate reference to the *Holy Spirit*, requiring of the baptized faith in him as a divine Perſon, and an expectation of his promiſed influence; that the *former* had no reſpect *at all* to that divine Perſon, nor ſuppoſed any information concerning him; in proof of which they urge, Acts xix. 2.—That Chriſtian baptiſm has an immediate relation to the promiſe of the Spirit exhibited in the goſpel diſpenſation, I grant and maintain, but that any baptized by John (or even his diſciples) ſhould be ſo groſsly ignorant as not to know any thing about the Holy Ghoſt, or never

to

to have *heard* of him, is highly improbable. There is nothing upon the subject more expressly and emphatically noticed by the evangelists, than that John directed those whom he baptized to Christ, *as one who would baptize with the Holy Ghost* and with fire. It appears probable, therefore, the disciples at Ephesus meant by their answer, That they had not been informed that the Holy Ghost, in his miraculous influence, had been actually conferred on any of the disciples of John or of the Messiah as yet. As if they had said, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost, miraculously communicated, much less have been made partakers of the same.—If this be not the import of their strange answer, what must we infer? Were they baptized by John in their *infancy*, about thirty years before? Were they children of parents who were so ignorant or so careless as not to inform them of this very important part of John's ministry? Could they be baptized by this popular reformer, or have any connection with those whom he disciples, and not be informed of that extraordinary fact, the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Jesus at his baptism? And was not the appellation *familiar* to John and his followers? Whether we consider these twelve men as natives of Ephesus or foreigners, as Jews or converted Gentiles, whether baptized with their parents in infancy, or when adults; attending the one interpretation there remains insuperable difficulties,

difficulties, according to the other none at all. See Acts x. 37, 38.

§ 12. THE baptiſm of John, therefore, was a rite appertaining to the legal diſpenſation, inſtituted by God the Father for the uſe of the Jews alone, for a ſhort time, to prepare them for the kingdom of the Meſſiah then approaching, as by an extraordinary general purification*, attended with ſuitable inſtructions and exhortations to the people, and performed by John himſelf.—And Chriſtian baptiſm, as far as it has been conſidered, is an evangelical rite, inſtituted by Chriſt, the Son of God, for the uſe of Jews and Gentiles, to the end of time, to be adminiſtered in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, or, more fully and properly, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, performed by Chriſt's diſciples.

THUS John's miniſtry and baptiſm were, in a manner, the voice of the FATHER crying by him in the wilderneſs to prepare the thouſands of Iſrael for a ſuitable reception of his divine Son.

* John's baptiſm is to be conſidered as one of thoſe "divers waſhings," in uſe among the Jews on many occaſions; for he did not attempt to make any alterations in the Jewiſh religion as ſettled by the Moſaic law, any more than to erect a new diſpenſation. And as theſe waſhings were intended not only for "the purifying of the fleſh," but to be ſigns and ſymbols of moral purity; ſo the rite of baptiſm was, in this view, very ſuitable to the doctrine of repentance, which John preached. JENNINGS's *Jewiſh Antiquities*, B. I. chap. iii. Art Proſelytes. — And the ſame Author concludes, from a paſſage in Joſephus, that the latter makes John's baptiſm to be of the nature of the Jewiſh purifications or ceremonial waſhings.

Son. BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD! Let your attention be drawn from all legal sacrifices, as about to cease; and let it be directed to HIM in whom all the law and the prophets have their accomplishment, and who is shortly, in a wonderful manner, to bear away the sin of the world!—And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED!—*Hear ye him.*——But the Christian baptism is the institution of the SON, proclaiming the necessity, and directing to the influences of the divine Spirit; and these influences poured upon the disciples of Jesus is the baptism of the SPIRIT. And thus we are led with wonder and gratitude to contemplate the *love* and provident care of the *Father*, the *mediation* and grace of the *Son*, and the efficacious and everlasting *operations* of the *Holy Ghost*. These three are one; and they concur in bearing record to the truth and glory of the blessed gospel. See 1 John v. 6—8. And those who are baptized in the name of Jesus, or the sacred Three-One, should incessantly breathe after the spirit of grace, to which the ordinance refers us. Jesus, our divine Master and Lord, is able and ready to baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire: not by conferring *miraculous* gifts, but, what is infinitely more important to us, *sanctifying* graces, whereby we may be purified and made meet for his heavenly kingdom.

§ 13. (2) IT must be allowed, in the next place, that between the baptism of John and that

of

of Chriſt, there is an *agreement* in ſome particulars. And

1. THEY were both from heaven, or of *divine* inſtitution. The one inſtituted by the *Father*, the other by the *Son*, but both alike by the higheſt authority.

2. THERE appears no mark of difference, in the two inſtitutions, as to the *action* of baptizing; we may, therefore, conclude, for aught the different accounts ſay to the contrary, that it was the ſame. Pure water was the common element, but the nature and mode of the action itſelf will be conſidered in its proper place.

3. THE ſame may be ſaid concerning the qualifications of their reſpective *ſubjects*; which qualifications and the grounds thereof, will be examined at large in the ſubſequent part of this treatiſe.

4. THERE was an agreement reſpecting ſome of the *bleſſings ſignified* and exhibited; particularly the *remiſſion of ſins*. Mark i. 4. Luke iii. 3. and Acts ii. 38.—They both referred to *Chriſt* as the *ſovereign diſpenſer* of the influences of the Spirit, the one indeed in a ſenſe more *remote*, and the other *directly*. See Mat. iii. 11. &c. and Acts ii. 38. &c.

5. SOME *obligations* were alſo ſimilar; eſpecially that of *repentance*. See Mat. iii. 11. Acts xxii. 16.—Alſo that they ſhould *believe on Chriſt*. Acts xix. 3—5. and chap. viii. 37.—Both required a ſuitable *reformation* of life and conduct.

§ 14. I AM led by an attentive and impartial ſurvey

survey of those sacred passages that have any reference to the baptismal rite, to consider it in its most *general nature*, as "the instituted ordi-"nance of a *regular admission into the visible king-*"*dom* of Christ, or, as it is sometimes called, the "kingdom of heaven; wherein the *minister* so-"lemnly *recognizes the fitness* of the baptized to "be a subject of that kingdom."

1. It is the instituted ordinance of a *regular* admission. See Acts ii. 41. Charity, and the nature of the case, compel me to conclude, that there are many whom we should deem subjects of Christ's kingdom, even in its visible form, who were never admitted into it *ministerially* by baptism. Among whom we may reckon at least the *promising* (not to say the *infant)* offspring of Antipædobaptists; many well meaning tho' erroneous disciples of Fox and Barkley, &c. Nor should this concession seem at all strange to those who disclaim the pretended *infallibility* of a visible church. But however willing we may be to embrace these in the arms of christian charity, as fellow subjects of Christ's kingdom, yet as they were never initiated into it by the solemn right of baptism, we cannot consider them as *regular* subjects.

2. It is an ordinance of admission into the *visible* kingdom of Christ. Compare Acts viii. 13. x. 47, 48. The Redeemer's kingdom is to be considered in two respects; as to its *spiritual form*, and its *external administration*. Many, no

 doubt,

doubt, belong to the *former*, who have no *regular* connection with the *latter*; and many, it is equally certain, are introduced to the Meſſiah's kingdom thro' the baptiſmal ceremony, (even in adult age,) who are not the ſubjects of his ſpiritual government. It is highly probable this was the caſe with great numbers of diſciples who followed Chriſt but for a ſeaſon, and then forſook him; we might alſo inſtance in Judas, Simon the ſorcerer, &c. And many will ſay at laſt, We have eaten and drunk in thy preſence, who yet will be diſowned. However *regular* the admiſſion, and however unimpeachable the *external* allegiance of ſome perſons, they may be, notwithſtanding, eſſentially deficient in a *ſpiritual* view, and be at laſt tranſlated into the kingdom of darkneſs.

3. It is a ſolemn *recognition* of the fitneſs of the baptized to be a ſubject of that kingdom. See Mat. xxviii. 19. The *qualifications* of the ſubjects muſt be of a moral nature, as before ſhewn, and baptiſm does not *produce* theſe but *ſuppoſe* them. So far is it, therefore, from ſaving a ſoul, *ex opere operato*, that it does not even *conſtitute* a viſible ſubject or member, but only *recognize* one; and ſo far from *making* the baptized a child of God, a member of Chriſt, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, in the proper ſenſe of theſe terms, that it is only *declarative* of his fitneſs to be a ſubject of the external adminiſtration of that kingdom. Acts viii. 13.

4. The

4. THE person whose right it is to determine this fitness is the *minister* who does solemnly recognize it. See Mat. xxviii. 19. Whatever extravagant notions have obtained respecting the power of the keys, in admitting into the kingdom of heaven or shutting out of it, there is, however, a sound sense in which this power is assigned to ministers. They are the appointed guardians of the institution, and have a negative voice in opposition to all claims. If they abuse this power, as *fallible* persons may, to their own Master they stand or fall. Their Sovereign and Judge is at hand.

§ 15. (1) LET us next inquire, by scripture evidence, into the things represented by this significant rite. Passages of information relating to this particular are very numerous; but if I mistake not, there is not one but is naturally reducible to these two heads, viz. *blessings exhibited* by it, and *obligations resulting* from it. I shall begin with the former.

1. ONE of the important blessings exhibited in the ordinance of christian baptism, as in a bright mirror, is the *remission of sins*. Acts ii. 38. In this, as observed before, the baptism of Christ agreed with that of John, and I may add, with the divers baptisms under the law (Heb. ix. 10.) Indeed it is not easy to conceive how there could be a dispensation of grace, or exhibition of mercy to fallen man, in any period of time, without including this blessing as an *essential* part of it.

2. It exhibits *ſalvation thro' Chriſt.* Mark xvi. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 21. The diſplay of *ſalvation*, ſimply conſidered, is not *peculiar* to the chriſtian œconomy, more than the remiſſion of ſins; but the peculiarity of the one and the other bleſſing under the goſpel diſpenſation is, that they are propoſed thro' the mediation and atonement of the Meſſiah *actually come.* Now, in this laſt moſt perfect and unſhaken eſtabliſhment of religion, the initiatory rite of it, baptiſm, exhibits ſalvation and life eternal to its highly favoured ſubjects, as not only procured by the *merits*, but alſo conferred by the *hands* of its divine Founder.

3. In chriſtian baptiſm is exhibited *union* and *communion* with Chriſt and with his body the church. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Rom. vi. 3, 4, &c. Col. ii. 11—13. Under every œconomical publication of mercy to the apoſtate race of Adam, *communion with God* was a privilege ſingularly important. This Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and indeed all the faithful, enjoyed in every age, more or leſs; and the ſubjects of thoſe diſpenſations, reſpectively, were favoured with the *exhibition* of it. But it is our diſtinguiſhed lot, as ſubjects of the goſpel kingdom, to have communion with Jehovah as our God and Father *in Chriſt*, with whoſe meritorious ſufferings and perfect righteouſneſs he is well pleaſed, diſplayed to us in the moſt explicit and endearing terms, and particularly in the ſignificant inſtitution of baptiſm. But *communion with Chriſt* the Son of God,

God, is of a nature ſtill more diſcriminating. For this ſuppoſes not only an acceſs to him for ſpiritual bleſſings, and a reception out of his fulneſs of a liberal ſupply, but alſo a twofold *union*; the one *federal*, the other *myſtical*. He exhibits himſelf, therefore, as a complete *covenant* head, to his viſible church, and therewith a correſpondent communion; and in virtue of which *general* exhibition, a foundation of hope and encouragement is adminiſtered to all without exception. And whenever the ordinance of baptiſm is duly adminiſtered, this glorious truth is repreſented and ſignified. Chriſt is alſo a head of *influence*; this truth, equally glorious and important, he alſo exhibits in the ſame general way; wherever the goſpel and its ordinances come, a proclamation is made, that Chriſt is the head of influence, that there is a moſt precious endearing communion between him and his people, that he regards them in point of nearneſs and tender love, *members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones**. And as Chriſt is thus the head, all quickened by his vital influence, are members in particular. Hence ariſes the communion of ſaints. *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; ſo alſo is Chriſt* and his Church; *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.* See alſo 1 John i. 3.

4. It exhibits Chriſt as our ſpiritual *covering* and complete righteouſneſs. Gal. iii. 27. Re-

* Eph. v. 30.

markable to this purpoſe are the words of Mr. LOCKE—"So that to God, now looking upon "them, there appears nothing but Chriſt. They "are as it were covered all over with him, as "a man is with the clothes he hath put on. "And hence he ſays in the next verſe, that "they are all one in Chriſt Jeſus, as if there "were but that one perſon †." In every inſtance of baptizing into Chriſt, an exhibition is made of him in this illuſtrious view: He is *ſet forth a propitiation.* He is diſplayed as a ſun and ſhield, a robe of righteouſneſs to cover our naked ſouls, and a garment of praiſe as a preſervative from ſorrow. That the *woman* ſhould be *clothed with the Sun*, the church enrobed with the Lord her righteouſneſs, was eſteemed a great wonder in *heaven* ‡, and ſhould be marvellous in *our* ſight.

§ 16. 5. IN baptiſm is eminently exhibited the *down-pouring* of the Holy Spirit. To this John bore conſtant witneſs, Mat. iii. 11. Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16. John i. 33.—And this our Lord confirmed, Acts i. 5.—This, moreover, Peter repeats, and further authenticates for the information and encouragement of the Gentiles, Acts ii. 38, 39.—Thus do the ancient promiſes and prophecies run reſpecting theſe divine influences, PROV. i. 23. Turn ye at my reproof, behold I will *pour out my Spirit* unto you.—Iſa. xliv. 3. I will *pour out my Spirit* upon thy ſeed.—Joel ii. 28. And it ſhall come to paſs afterward

† Paraph. *in loc.* ‡ Rev. xii. 1.

ward, that I will *pour out my Spirit* upon all flesh, &c. that is, I presume, "Under the gospel dispensation I will make an exhibition of "this invaluable privilege to Jews and Gentiles "without distinction." This prediction Peter applies to the *miraculous* effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 17, 18. But that he does not exclude his *common* influences in after times from being a part of the promise, appears from *v.* 29.—To the same purpose is the language of Zec. chap. xii. 10. And I will *pour* upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications, &c. Such a general promise must intend an *œconomical exhibition* of the blessing; as is evident from the apostolick writings, Heb. iv. 16. James i. 5. &c. And especially from our Lord's declarations and conduct, Luke ii. 13. John vii. 37—39.—Under *former* dispensations God granted to his people his Holy Spirit; when he was comparatively but *as the dew* unto Israel, or the *small rain* on the tender herb; but now he is *poured* on the Gentiles, and *shed abundantly*, not only thro' the mediation, but also by the actual communications of Jesus Christ our Lord, Tit. iii. 6. Acts ii. 33. x. 45. John i. 33.

6. REGENERATION, or the quickening influence of the divine Spirit on a sinful soul, is another blessing exhibited in the baptismal rite. John iii. 5. Tit. iii. 5. From the evident reference baptism has to this effect of the Spirit on

the ſouls of the redeemed, the ancient Fathers termed the ordinance itſelf, Παλιγγενεσια, *regeneration*. And others have obſerved a ſtriking analogy between the baptiſmal element, and the regenerating efficacy of the Spirit. "*Water* is "the *principle* of very many *living things*, and "in their creation the Spirit brooded on the "*waters*, Gen. i. 3. The earth produces ſcarce "any thing that has life, either of the vegetable "or reptile kind, unleſs it be impregnated with "*water*, Pſalm lxv. 10. The very generation of "the human fœtus is ſaid to be from *water*, "Iſa. xlviii. 1. Pſalm lxviii. 27. Thus in like "manner, the blood and Spirit of Chriſt, as the "myſtical *water*, are the principles of our re-"generation and new creation. John iii. 5. and "as that is *ſignified* by the *water* of baptiſm, ſo bap-"tiſm itſelf is called, Tit. iii. 5. *The waſhing of* "*regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt**.

7. SANCTIFICATION, or the cleanſing effect of the Spirit on a polluted ſoul, is a mercy very ſignificantly repreſented, and graciouſly exhibited in baptiſm. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Epheſ. v. 26. *The waſhing away the filth of the fleſh*, as Peter (1 Ep. chap. iii. 21.) calls baptiſm, is not only an apt and expreſſive *ſign* of the Spirit's purifying influence, but alſo a divinely appointed *mirror*, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, in which God *exhibits* the bleſſing to all thus regularly enrolled among the ſubjects of his kingdom, in the moſt conſpicuous manner. This remark is equally applicable to all the *other* particulars

* Witſii Oecon. Fœder. Lib. iv. Cap. xvi. § 24.

ticulars before mentioned as to this of ſanctification. And it is a diſtinction I could wiſh the reader fully to enter into, being of no ſmall moment in this debate, as will appear hereafter.

§ 17. 8. WHAT crowns all the other bleſſings, and in which indeed they are all virtually included, is man's chief and ALL-SUFFICIENT GOOD; and this is what baptiſm exhibits in a very expreſs and glorious manner, Mat. xxviii. 29.—The ever adorable and bleſſed God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, uſes and dignifies this ordinance for the purpoſe of *diſplaying* his wonderful condeſcenſion and grace to every ſubject, introduced thro' this avenue into the viſible chriſtian kingdom, thereby explicitly teſtifying, as of old to Abraham, that he is GOD ALL-SUFFICIENT. He declares himſelf a merciful and loving *Father*, an almighty and gracious *Redeemer*, and moſt holy *Sanctifier*. But it is a conſideration peculiarly worthy of our regard, that herein he does not merely declare what he is in himſelf, but what he is in relation to guilty helpleſs ſinners. To thoſe who have eſcaped the corruption that is in the world thro' luſt, or have been regularly entered as the ſubjects of the Redeemer's kingdom, are exhibited exceeding great and precious promiſes, that by theſe they might be partakers of a divine nature. 2 Pet. i. iv.—*Bleſſed is the people*, comparatively ſo at any rate, *whoſe God is the Lord*, who are authorized and encouraged to approach JEHOVAH as the object of their worſhip, truſt and confidence;

and bleſſed in a manner ſtill more emphatical if their hearts, however corrupt by nature, are aſſimilated by grace to his moral image. Pſa. xxxiii. 12. clxiv. 15.—It is further obſervable, that the unworthineſs, yea the moral unfitneſs of the ſubject, does not eclipſe this glorious truth; for as the heavenly Father maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt, ſo the *œconomical exhibition* of himſelf, under the moſt illuſtrious and endearing characters, is to every ſubject of his goſpel kingdom without exception. Whatever reception his mercy meets with among men, *he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himſelf.* See 2 Tim. ii. 11—14. And he ſtill *ſhineth*, even *in darkneſs*, tho' *the darkneſs comprehendeth him not.* John i. 4, &c.—This hath been the common and exalted privilege of the ſubjects of every diſpenſation of true religion that ever was in the world, viz. That JEHOVAH graciouſly *propoſed* himſelf to them as their CHIEF GOOD. But this *propoſal*, or revealed exhibition, of the GREAT SUPREME made by himſelf to thoſe whom his providence ſingled out, tho' it ſeems the principal and moſt diſtinguiſhing feature of each œconomy, from the firſt to the ſecond Adam, hath yet been characterized by different degrees of explicitneſs. What the wiſe man ſays of the path of the juſt, that it *ſhines more and more to the perfect day*, is peculiarly applicable to the gradual openings of the diſpenſations of grace. The fall of Adam brought upon his poſterity

posterity a night of moral darkness, uncertainty, and justly apprehended danger; while additional discoveries were made of the divine will, and numerous witnesses raised to promulgate the certainty and approach of greater and better blessings; till, at length, the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS appeared to illuminate the hemisphere of the gospel church, as a prelude to a state of unclouded and immortal glory. By the gospel life and immortality are brought to light, and placed in full view. What was hidden from ages and generations is now made manifest to the saints; and they are encouraged, with open face, to behold the glory of the Lord. O glorious privilege! Blessed are the eyes that see, and the ears that hear these things! The meanest christian hath no need to envy the dignity of kings, or the honour of prophets, that died without this sight. And let not the reader forget, that the very exhibition made in baptism of such blessings, is an important privilege.

§ 18. (2) THE *things signified* in baptism are either *blessings* or *obligations*; we have considered the former, and now proceed to the latter, which we shall find to be great and important. And

1. FROM christian baptism results the obligation of *repentance*. Acts xxii. 16. Every display of divine goodness obliges a sinful creature to repent, (Rom. ii. 4.) but an exhibition of mercy and forgiveness increases the obligation. And as in baptism are held forth the greatest mercies and blessings, it must proportionably oblige

to a diſpoſition correſponding thereto. Now tho' *remiſſion of ſins* be repreſented in ſcripture as *generally* granted *upon* repentance, (Acts iii. 19.) it does not follow that there is no remiſſion granted without it; but this is clear, that actual *impenitence* perſiſted in, excludes remiſſion. And thoſe who are the ſubjects of forgiveneſs, but under a natural incapacity to repent, may be ſaid, notwithſtanding, to be under obligation in this ſenſe, viz. That the *principle* of holineſs and rectitude, from which evangelical repentance muſt proceed, is what every child of Adam is *obliged* to, or *ought* to poſſeſs. And the natural capacity itſelf is under an abſolute obligation to ſubſerve the dictates of that principle.

2. FROM baptiſm ariſes the obligation to *deſtroy the body of ſin*. Rom. vi. 3, 4, &c. That the paſſage now quoted refers to the OBLIGATION reſulting from baptiſm, to *renounce*, to *crucify*, to *deſtroy* and *bury* ſin, is evident from the connection. The apoſtle had been ſhewing that a ſinner's *juſtification* was obtained freely by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed, and ſo the privilege not founded on any deeds of the law, or any good quality whatever in the perſon juſtified; no efforts or worthineſs of the guilty ſinner could ever deliver him from the condemnation of ſin. This repreſentation of the ſubject gave riſe to an Antinomian objection, which the apoſtle firſt rejects with abhorrence, and then particularly refutes. And this he does by ſhewing that *holineſs*, as well as righteouſneſs, is an eſſential

eſſential part of the chriſtian character; that ſin muſt be *ſubdued* as well as *pardoned*; and that as our righteouſneſs was obtained by the perfect work of Chriſt, ſo our ſanctification is effected by virtue of a vital *union* with him. Now this myſtical, vital, ſpiritual *union* is one of the great bleſſings exhibited in baptiſm; and from it reſult the moſt important obligations. Such a union requires particularly, that we ſhould concur with the grand *deſigns* of Chriſt as the Saviour of his people. In regard to *ſin*, it was his *deſign* to reſiſt it in every inſtance, to renounce it in every ſhape, to nail it to his croſs, and ſo to deſtroy and bury it, that neither himſelf nor his redeemed people ſhould be in any reſpect voluntary ſubjects of ſin's power; *he* of its imputative force, *they* of its enſlaving and defiling dominion. The perſon who is baptized into this union with Chriſt, (and ſo is every one that is baptized at all) is, from the very notion of ſuch a union, under an obligation of univerſal conformity to this important deſign. Chriſt is the vine, his diſciples and ſubjects are the branches. As divine juſtice dealt with ſin in Chriſt the ſurety, ſo ought we to deal with it in ourſelves. In him it was condemned, crucified, utterly deſtroyed and buried; our union with Chriſt repreſented by baptiſm obliges to a cordial concurrence in the ſame deſign. If juſtice ſpared ſin in Chriſt, ſo may we in ourſelves, otherwiſe not. If juſtice avenged itſelf on ſin in our repreſentative and head, ſo ſhould we in ourſelves. Chriſt, in his unparalleled

unparalleled condeſcenſion, and by virtue of his federal engagement, became ſo united to our imputed ſin, that he and ſin muſt live or die together. If he had not died, ſin had not died. If he had not been buried, ſin could not be buried. Then the union was diſſolved, when both were dead and buried. But the ſame glorious power that was pleaſed to bruiſe, to ſmite, to put him to grief, and ſacrifice him to death, when united to ſin; did, when he became diſengaged from it, raiſe him up to immortal life and glory. Nor can our new man be raiſed, till our old man be dead and buried. Therefore, inſtead of cheriſhing and animating in ourſelves the monſter ſin, for the eternal deſtruction and burial of which Chriſt was crucified and buried, we are under the ſtrongeſt *obligation* to concur with his deſign, to bring it to a ſtate of death and keep it there, putting our foot as it were on its horrid neck whenever it attempts to riſe. And as Chriſt, the tree of life, was taken from the trees of the wood, and after his death planted in the earth, that, freed from ſin, he might grow and flouriſh with immortal vigour; ſo we ought to plant ourſelves with Chriſt, that our corrupt nature may be left with his imputed ſin and weakneſs, and our ſpiritual nature may grow up with him into a ſimilar fruitfulneſs, vigour and glory. Or, as a graft cannot participate of the ſap, life and fruitfulneſs of another tree except it be firſt ſevered from its old ſtock, leaving it for ever behind; ſo we cannot partake of ſpiritual life and

and fruitfulneſs from Chriſt, but by being ſevered and entirely diſengaged from our ſinful ſelves, that we may grow up into him in all things. The apoſtle's ſimilitude when treating of the reſurrection is not inapplicable to the ſubject of this myſtical union. *That which thou ſoweſt is not quickened except it die.* All ſeeds, and ſome ſpecies of plants, never ſpring up into new life, but by the death and corruption of at leaſt a part thereof. When the germen ſprouts forth, the other part conſumes away in the ground. Thus as baptiſm obliges to a concurrence with the *deſign of this union in general*, which is exhibited in baptiſm, ſo particularly with that of mortifying and *deſtroying the body of ſin*.

§ 19. 3. FROM baptiſm reſults the obligation of *newneſs of life and heavenly-mindedneſs*. Rom. vi. 4, 8, 11, 13, 19, &c. And this is peculiarly enforced by the apoſtle from the doctrine of vital union to Chriſt; union of deſign, union of intereſt; a certain oneneſs of ſpirit, of life, light, and liberty. For as Chriſt is riſen and aſcended to a ſtate of triumph over ſin and hell, a ſtate of refined pleaſure, and an inexpreſſible, ſerene delight, in ſpiritual purity and the beauty of holineſs; ſo every perſon baptized *into Chriſt* is baptized into *his life*, and lies under the ſtrongeſt obligations of being thus conformed to him.

4. FROM our baptiſm ariſes the obligation of an inviolable *attachment to Chriſt* as our ſupreme Maſter and Lord. 1 Cor. i. 13. Chriſt is our maſter; he demands of us to regard him as ſuch

ſuch, and he alone is deſerving of it: No one elſe deſerves to be called Maſter on earth. And as none can ſerve two maſters of different and oppoſite intereſts, with the ſame fidelity and affection; by baptiſm, the right of a regular entrance into his family and ſervice, we are obliged to be faithfully attached to him and his intereſt intirely. Chriſt is a King, and his church is a kingdom (but not of this world) and every ſubject of this kingdom is in loyal duty bound to adhere to Chriſt as the lawful and infinitely worthy Sovereign.

5. An obligation is laid on the baptized perſon to ſeek and maintain *the anſwer of a good conſcience* towards God. 1 Pet. iii. 21. God's requiſitions and demands from us are very great and awful. As a holy and juſt God, he claims perfection of ſtate and obedience from the creature; nothing ſhort of perfection will God accept, or the conſcience approve of. How, then, can a ſinner make a *confident appeal* to God, when anſwering his demands as a judge, or claiming the peculiar bleſſings of a God in covenant? What proviſion is made to calm the ſurges of the mind? What can diſſipate the gloom of adverſe providences, or ſupport the ſoul, conſcious of much frailty and imperfection, in the apprehenſions of approaching death?—A *conſciouſneſs* of being united to Chriſt as the riſen Saviour. As united to him we are *juſtified* by his *reſurrection*; and *ſaved* by his conſtant interceſſion, his heavenly and immortal *life*. In baptiſm

tism, indeed, are represented and exhibited God's all-sufficiency, his matchless greatness and goodness, the boundless and unfathomable riches of his grace; and a cordial, conscious embracing of these blessings must satisfy conscience and produce a serene content in the mind. But what the conscience has to do with, in the passage above cited, is, I presume, more immediately, the claim of divine justice and holiness. The *resurrection of Christ* is, then, the great *evidence* we have that justice is satisfied with his finished work, and so it becomes an objective ground of confidence to the conscience (otherwise terrified with guilt and condemnation) in its reply to the divine claims. And being conscious of a *vital union* with Christ, the consideration of his victorious resurrection and triumphant ascension lays the foundation of holy joy and triumph. But it is a remark not a little important, that here the remedy is *proportioned* to the disease; the answer of a *good conscience* is to the *believer*, adequate to the clamours of an *evil conscience* to the *unbeliever*.

§ 20. 6. From baptism results the obligation of filling up (honourably no doubt) the place of departed christians. Rom. xv. 29. What Solomon remarks of the generations of the world of mankind, thro' the successive revolutions of time, is applicable to the church of God in the world. *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh* *. All alike make their

* Eccles. i. 4.

their exit thro' the gate of death; for it is appointed for *all men* once to die, by an irreverſible decree. How, then, is the depopulated kingdom of Chriſt to be recruited? When perſecution with its mercileſs attendants, and the waſting meſſengers of death, render the church like a deſolate iſland, how is it to be colonized? By conſtant ſupplies from the wide world. The world is a common nurſery from whence the church is planted; but the watering of baptiſm is not of itſelf ſufficient to enſure the future growth, verdure, and fruitfulneſs of the plants; for in this plantation, the church viſible, every plant which the heavenly Father planteth not (of which there have always been awful inſtances) ſhall be rooted up. Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God giveth the increaſe. But notwithſtanding this, miniſters are commiſſioned to tranſplant and to water, leaving the event to God. But to ſpeak without a figure, it is evident, that when any are brought into the church regularly by baptiſm, to fill up the room of others, they are obligated to do it honourably and uſefully; even as a member that is choſen into any body corporate, or a ſoldier to fill a place in a rank or regiment.

7. From the ordinance of baptiſm ariſes the obligation of *waiting for the promiſe of the Spirit.* Acts ii. 38, 39. viii. 12—17. The goſpel diſpenſation is eminently diſtinguiſhed from all preceding it, by a rich diſplay and communication of the influences of the Spirit, not only in

in a miraculous way, but also as a *Sanctifier*, and especially as a *Comforter*, to the church. And as this is a blessing of unspeakable value, and most explicitly exhibited in christian baptism, every person to whom it hath been administered is under the strongest obligation to seek and wait for all necessary divine influences. This is the unction from the Holy One which we all want; and, thro' the divine mercy, there is in the institution of baptism a foundation laid for the most importunate and unwearied application for all needful supplies thereof. We can never be too ardent and importunate in our desires and prayers for the illuminating, quickening, teaching, and transforming influences of the Spirit. And this incessant breathing of the soul after the divine influences, is not only its interest and comfort when so employed; but, in consequence of baptism, where the blessing, by virtue of the divine appointment, is clearly set forth, it is what every subject is absolutely *obliged* to do. And as no one can be so far replenished as not to need further supplies, the obligation must be constant, thro' every step of our life.

§ 21. 8. ANOTHER obligation highly important resulting from christian baptism, is an absolute devotedness to the *grace* and sovereign *will* of GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. Mat. xxviii. 19.—Baptism (εις ονομα) *into the name* of Father, Son and Spirit, implies an obligation,

(1) To

(1) To receive this God, and him *alone*, for our God, as the object of our worſhip, the ſovereign of our heart, and our everlaſting portion; to the abſolute diſavowal and renunciation of all competitors whatſoever.

(2) To receive him under the repreſentation here given of himſelf, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That theſe three terms belong to God only, and not the firſt to the true God, and the other two to beings of an *inferior* claſs, (and if at all *inferior*, they muſt be *infinitely* ſo) ſeems evident from the *manner* in which they are connected; for from *this* nothing leſs can be obſerved than *equality* among them; and the importance of this remark riſes ſtill higher when we reflect, that the goodneſs of God, — his deteſtation of idolatry, — the excellency of the goſpel above other religions, — and the exalted character of Jeſus as the founder of it, — are neceſſarily *degraded* if this be not the fact. For thus to aſſociate the terms, Father, Son, and Spirit, in a ſolemn ordinance of religion, the very *introductory* ordinance, on ſuppoſition that an infinite diſparity ſubſiſts between the objects they refer to, appears like putting a dangerous ſtumbling-block at the very porch of the chriſtian temple. But his true diſciples have not ſo learned Chriſt; and wiſdom is juſtified of her children.

(3) EVERY baptized perſon is laid under obligations of duty to Father, Son, and Spirit, *reſpectively*

respectively, according to the scripture representations of these divine Persons, and their several *relations* to him, whether absolute or exhibited only.

(4) ANOTHER obligation included in the form of administration is, cordially to embrace the infinite mercy, grace, and love of God, herein exhibited. Every expression of benevolence and favour from God, obliges the person to whom it is directed, to answerable gratitude; but no one that hath been admitted, by baptism, into the number of Christ's regular subjects, can say that he hath not had represented in his baptism unspeakably great and glorious blessings, and this he may be as certain of as he can be of the *fact*—THAT HE WAS BAPTIZED. Whether he be certified of his baptism by the evidence of *sense*, or competent human *testimony*, does not alter the case; to be sure of the *fact* is to be equally sure of the exhibited blessing and the correspondent obligation.

(5) To be influenced, actuated, transformed, directed and governed by that mediatorial grace and mercy which is displayed by the medium of this ordinance. Tho' the divine mercy be like a most delightful sun-shine, in itself, yet mankind are so situated in the present state as not to be benefited by it but by reflection. (See 2 Cor. iii. 18.) The face, or person of Christ,—the inspired records,—the ordinances and institutions of the gospel,—and this initiatory rite in particular, do eminently answer this important

important end. And in proportion as this laſt does ſo, the baptized perſon is obliged by it.

(6) To be abſolutely devoted to the ſovereign *will* of God; ſo as to be at his command and diſpoſal in every reſpect. As our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, he hath an undoubted right to us; all we are, all we have, and all we do; which right being evidently repreſented, and as it were reflected, by the ordinance, to every ſubject of it, obliges to a ſuitable and adequate devotedneſs to his will.

§ 22. HAVING now conſidered the bleſſings exhibited by baptiſm, and the obligations reſulting from it, by an attentive regard to what the New Teſtament ſays on the ſubject, I proceed to make ſome remarks that ſeem to follow from the whole as obvious *concluſions*. And

(1) WHATEVER bleſſings are, according to the ſcripture account, repreſented and exhibited by baptiſm, there are *anſwerable obligations* reſulting from them, tho' not particularly ſpecified. And this appears from the very nature and ſpring of moral obligation; for one perſon is *obliged* to another in proportion as he is *indebted* to him, ſo that to be under obligation to another, with reſpect to *univerſal juſtice*, is the ſame as to be his debtor; and the nature and degree of this *debt* muſt be aſcertained by the comparative *worthineſs* of the perſon to whom we are indebted, in all thoſe reſpects in which we ſuppoſe him to have a demand or claim upon us. For inſtance, if *obedience* be the debt, then it ſhould

ſhould be according to the worthineſs of the comparative *authority* requiring it; if the debt be *gratitude*, it ſhould be according to the worthineſs of the benefits, or expreſſed benevolence, of the party benefiting, compared with the worthineſs or unworthineſs of the party benefited; and if the debt be *love* or benevolence, it ſhould be according to the worthineſs or excellence of the perſon himſelf, which worthineſs conſiſts in the joint conſideration of greatneſs and goodneſs. Let us apply theſe reflections to the preſent caſe. *God* is infinitely great, and infinitely good; hence every intelligent being is under infinite obligation to *love* him, becauſe he is infinitely excellent and worthy, yea, is *worthineſs itſelf* in every poſſible reſpect.—God's *benefits* to man are emanations from his matchleſs benevolence, and the greatneſs of thoſe benefits exhibited in the goſpel diſpenſation, or, which is the ſame thing, in its initiatory rite, are of unparalleled excellence and importance. Behold, ſays an inſpired Apoſtle, what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed on us! And, ſays another, To us are given exceeding great and precious promiſes. The riches of Chriſt are unſearchable riches; then what muſt be the gift of Chriſt himſelf! And what muſt be the miſſion of the Divine Comforter! What a worthineſs of favour is here, and what a call to *gratitude!* Again, God's *authority* is ſupreme, and its worthineſs is infinite; and, as every exhibition of mercy and favour deſigned for ſinners, and *addreſſed* to them as *ſuch*,

ſuch, claims from them a ſuitable and correſponding tribute of gratitude, and the obligation or debt riſes and multiplies as the favour does, it follows, that the moſt free and ſovereign grace of the goſpel muſt, in this reſpect, have all the force, influence and authority of a law upon all to whom it is directed. All the exhibitions of goſpel bleſſings, therefore, have an authoritative and binding power, (for this is neceſſarily implied in the very idea of obligation) even when they are not delivered in a commanding form; but when a diſregard to goſpel bleſſings is *declared*, in the moſt expreſs terms, to be diſpleaſing to God and deſtructive to ourſelves; when we are poſitively told, that a non-compliance with the propoſals of mercy is the ſame inſult as *to charge the God of truth with impious falſehood*, (1 John v. 10.) the authority with which goſpel grace appears inveſted is infinitely important. From theſe conſiderations it appears, that wherever we meet with a benefit or bleſſing exhibited in baptiſm, we may as ſafely conclude that an *anſwerable obligation* reſults therefrom, as if that obligation were mentioned in form. — Another concluſion, which is in a manner the converſe of that now mentioned, is the following, viz. That whatever obligations we find ſpecified in the New Teſtament as actually connected with baptiſm, or derived from it, we may be ſure that the foundation of that obligation is laid in the exhibition of *anſwerable benefits*, tho' not expreſsly mentioned in that view.

§ 23.

§ 23. (2.) If the above representation of the nature and design of this ordinance be just, it may contribute to vindicate the *right use* of two very important terms, commonly employed in the controversy, liable to abuse, and, may I not add, very seldom explained in a consistent manner? I mean the terms SEAL and COVENANT. Hardly any thing more common in explaining the nature of baptism than some such phrase as this — "It is a sign and *seal* of the gospel covenant": and the authority usually urged in favour of this application of the word *seal*, is what the Apostle says touching circumcision, Rom. iv. 11. *And he received the sign of circumcision, a* SEAL *of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.* Waving a particular discussion of the many strange things this notable passage has been made to speak, and the absurd deductions following thereupon; I would observe, that the chief, if not the only, source of these mistakes, has been owing to the want of a proper attention to the *different uses* of SEALS among the ancients, in connection with the *different acceptations* of the term COVENANT.

THE word *covenant*, as I shall shew more fully afterward, frequently intends, in the holy scriptures, a gracious *decree*, the exhibition of a free *promise*, or the like, directed for the use of any; and in the above text the *exhibited blessing* is the *righteousness of faith*. This is the divine proclamation, full of mercy and grace, that

righteouſneſs and eternal life ſhould be received by *faith*, as that is oppoſed to work and *merit*; which by no means implies, that the bleſſing is never communicated to any of the human race but in conſequence of a certain act of the mind called believing. Prevailing *unbelief*, it is true, excludes all actual intereſt in the contents of the gracious charter; as it indicates a want of union with the divine Saviour, which is the grand foundation of our being accepted as righteous: and *true belief*, for a ſimilar reaſon, entitles to that righteouſneſs which faith regards. But faith, or believing, as an *act* of the mind, is not the fundamental and eſſential bond of union; for in *that* reſpect the ſpirit of Chriſt, whereby the fallen ſinner is apprehended, is the bond; and which may ſubſiſt without the exiſtence of any ſuch act, as all muſt allow who admit that it appears agreeable to the divine conſtitution to impute righteouſneſs to infants, who have neither works nor faith. This is ſufficient to ſhew that the *righteouſneſs* exhibited and reckoned to Abraham, which was the infinite merit of the divine Interpoſer, may have its complete effect on *ſome* of the human race, without any actual reſtipulation on their part: tho' at the ſame time, it lays them under *obligations* of a ſuitable return, whether deſigned for life or death. And if ſo, here is a *covenant*, (if we intend thereby *an application* of mercy and righteouſneſs) without any ſealing, or ſo much as *conſenting*, on the part of the perſon benefited.

AMONG

AMONG the ancients, as well as the moderns, the uſe of SEALS was various; and by no means confined to *contracts*, or agreements between two or more parties. An act, patent, or charter, &c. of a monarch is ſealed, as well as a mutual contract. Seals were affixed to *letters* and *decrees*. 1 Kings xxi. 8. Eſth. iii. 12, 15. Chap. viii. 8, 10. &c. &c. In ſhort, merchants were wont to put a ſeal or mark (uſually on a thin piece of lead, not wax) on their commodities; different things were ſealed for ſecurity againſt intruſion and deceit, as bags, cheſts, doors, &c. Thus, for inſtance, God ſays (Deut. xxxii. 34.) Is not this laid up in ſtore with me, and *ſealed* up among my *treaſures?* And thus Job ſays, (Chap. xiv. 17.) My tranſgreſſion is *ſealed* up in a *bag*. When Daniel was caſt into the lions' den, a ſtone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the *den*, and the king *ſealed* it with his own ſignet; (Dan. vi. 17.) and the ſtone on our Lord's *ſepulchre* was *ſealed*, (Mat. xxvii. 66.)——When, therefore, the apoſtle ſtiles circumciſion a *ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith*, it ſeems an unwarrantable liberty to infer, that the ſeal here referred to muſt neceſſarily be that of a reſtipulator in acceding to the terms of a contract; as if the *faith* of Abraham, or of his deſcendants, or of any other whoſe faith *ſhould be* in uncircumciſion, gave exiſtence to circumciſion *as a ſeal*. Why not rather conſider it, as what the eternal King has thought fit to affix

to an *act of grace?* What the inſtrument to be ſealed contained, was an *exhibition of righteouſneſs*; and, for confirmation that this righteouſneſs was recommended, as the only foundation of a ſinner's hope, and as an all-ſufficient introduction to eternal bliſs, God appointed circumciſion to ratify or *ſeal* it. This inſtrument or *covenant* contained glad tidings of great joy, which ſhould be firſt to the houſe of Iſrael principally, and afterwards to all nations; it was the goſpel in miniature. And the *ſeal* was to continue until the ſeed ſhould come; when expreſs order ſhould be given for its abolition, to make way for another. But as long as this ordinance continued in force, it *exhibited*, not only to the ſubject himſelf but to all who ſhould obſerve it, whether male or female — nor only while the ceremony was performed, but in every period of life — the *certainty* of theſe glad tidings. If any doubt aroſe concerning either the *covenant bleſſings* or *obligations* repreſented, they were to have recourſe to circumciſion, as the broad ſeal of heaven; whereby they might be certified, that the *former* continued in full force and virtue, by way of exhibition, for their uſe, whether male or female; and that the *latter* were unavoidably incumbent on them.

§ 24. Let us now advert to what Mr. B. has to ſay on this ſubject. "If Dr. Lightfoot's verſion of Rom. iv. 11. and his obſervation upon it, be juſt; there can be little reaſon for

for calling *baptism* a *seal* of the *covenant*, on account of *circumcision* being denominated a *seal* of *righteousness*. His translation of the text, and part of his remark upon it, are as follow. "*And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which* SHOULD HEREAFTER BE *in uncircumcision*. Which *should be*, not which *had been*. Not what had been to *Abraham*, as yet uncircumcised; but which should be to *his seed* uncircumcised; that is, to *Gentiles* that should hereafter imitate the faith of *Abraham*." Which version and interpretation (adds Mr. B.) are agreeable, so far as I can perceive, both to the scope of the passage and the letter of the text. For the Apostle does not represent circumcision as a seal of righteousness to the Jews, *in common*; but to Abraham, *in particular*.—— Or, if our brethren must needs call it [baptism] a seal of the covenant, we desire to be informed, what *spiritual blessing* it ascertains, really ascertains to infants, any more than to unbelieving adults, who have at any time been baptized; or, than circumcision, to similar characters, under the former œconomy? Millions of Jews were circumcised in their infancy, and numbers of Proselytes, who lived and died in rebellion against the government and grace of God. Simon the sorcerer, professing faith in Jesus Christ, though he had it not, was baptized by Philip; and many, no doubt, in former and latter ages, have been baptized on a similar profession, whose

conduct disgraced the christian character. Now, must we consider these, *all* these, as having had the *righteousness of faith*, or the *covenant of grace*, RATIFIED or SEALED to them? Far be it! Why, then, should baptism be represented at every turn, and without hesitation, as a *seal* of the covenant, when applied to infants?" † To this I will subjoin the following remarks from Dr. STENNETT. "The practice of affixing *seals* to covenants is of very early date. The use and intent of it is, to bind the parties contracting to the fulfilment of the conditions agreed on between them; and to preserve to that end, an authentic proof of the transaction.—— Now IF this be the practice alluded to, there is an impropriety in the phrase itself, of persons *having a right to the seal of the covenant:* for if sealing be a matter rather of *duty* than of *right*, to use this kind of language is much the same as to say, that persons have a right to do their duty. But what I have principally to observe is, that it follows from *this* account of the usage of sealing, that interest in a covenant does not in all instances give persons a right to the seal of it, or, in other words, make it their duty to affix their seal to it. A man may be included in a covenant or benefited by it, who is no way a party to it, and whose signature therefore is not at all requisite. Children, for instance, frequently derive advantages from covenants

† Pædob. Exam. p. 313.

nants which, with all the authentic forms of them, existed long before they were born." † And on Rom. iv. 11. he further remarks: "Abraham believed in the promise of God respecting the Messiah, and by voluntarily *submitting* to circumcision in obedience to the divine command, he gave clear evidence of his faith; and so circumcision became, in regard of *him*, a seal or authentic proof of his justification; it was a seal affixed by Abraham himself to the covenant, and an attestation, on the part of God, to his interest in the blessings of it. And in the same light it might be considered in regard of *others*, who submitted to it in *riper* years, and upon the conviction of their judgment. It was an expression of their assent and consent to the covenant, and so a seal affixed by them to it. And it was on the part of God (to speak with reverence) a seal affixed by him to the covenant, that is, a gracious assurance, with respect to those who thus in faith submitted to it, that he would pardon, accept and save them. ‖ —— It is easy to see that baptism cannot be a seal of the righteousness of faith, that is, of their justification, to infants, they not having *faith:* nor can it be in regard of them a test of new obedience, they not *voluntarily submitting* to it."— And again, "Circumcision was *a token of the covenant between God and Abraham.* A positive arbitrary sign, instituted by God

† S's Answer to *A.* p. 105. ‖ p. 107.

to bring to remembrance that tranſaction, in the ſame manner as the bow in the heavens was appointed by God, as a token of 'the *tranſaction between him and Noah.*" § Thus I have endeavoured to give theſe gentlemen's objections and reaſons all the ſtrength they admit of; nor have I deſignedly evaded the force of any one circumſtance; but forbear further quotations, to avoid prolixity: concluding, that if theſe poſitions are fairly and ſolidly refuted, as far as they tend to oppoſe Pædobaptiſt principles, this is ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe. I only obſerve here previouſly, that if the reader will give himſelf the trouble to conſult and weigh impartially what I have ſaid in the laſt ſection, moſt, if not all that is here advanced, is in effect anſwered or precluded. However, I ſhall not decline a more particular examination of what they urge.

§ 25. WHATEVER appearance of argument there is in theſe quotations, againſt the propriety of calling circumciſion and baptiſm *in general*, that is, conſidered merely *as inſtitutions*, independent of the genuine *faith* of the ſubject, *ſeals* of the covenant, is reducible to theſe poſitions.—— " Abraham's covenant was a *contract* between God and Abraham, and as ſuch required a *mutual* agreement of both parties. — Mr. B. will have it, that circumciſion was not a *ſeal* of righteouſneſs to the Jews *in common*; but

§ p. 109.

but to Abraham, *in particular*. Dr. S. maintains that it was so to *all believing* Jews; but both agree, that it was not a *seal* of righteousness to Jewish infants: and the common reason is, that they were not capable of *assenting* or submitting to the contract.——And on these accounts baptism is not a seal of righteousness to any infants, or even adults who are not true believers."—— Here are several things taken for granted which ought to have been first proved. And, first, I maintain, it is not true that what is called the Abrahamic covenant was a *contract* between God and Abraham; as if it could not be properly termed God's covenant *to* or *with* Abraham, without the latter's *believing consent*. For,

1. NOTHING is more clear, than that the first publication of mercy to our fallen parents (Gen. iii. 15.) was of the nature of a *free promise*. We may, perhaps, not improperly call it, The first edition of the covenant of grace that was ever published and revealed to man. Nor was it in their power to alter its nature as a covenant. Their not believing could not have made the faith of God of no effect. The revealed and exhibited blessing was God's covenant *to* man, or, if you please, *with* man, which amounts to the same thing in regard of God's transactions with sinners, independent of his assent and consent to the terms of it. For God to publish his covenant to sinners, few or many, is one thing; and for these to give it a cordial reception, is

another. Such a tranſaction, on the part of God, may ſtand on the moſt abſolute foundation; and if we believe not, he abideth faithful and true to his declaration: but a *believing* concurrence, or a *diſpoſition* ſuited to ſuch an exhibited favour, is what proceeds from a very different diſpenſation; that of the Spirit of grace in executing the hidden counſel of Heaven.— The covenant of grace is ONE. In its original *internal* form, which comes under the notion of a contract or mutual agreement in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, it is perfectly *abſolute*; as founded on the ſovereign pleaſure and irreverſible decrees of God. It is alſo *abſolute* in its *exhibition* to ſome rather than to others; for in this ſenſe as well as the former it may be ſaid, God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compaſſion on whom he will have compaſſion. Whatever is *conditional* of it is on account of man's *free nature* and God's *moral government*. Its publication and exhibition to man, *as a free agent*, ſolicits and requires his approbation — his obedient reception of what is propoſed to him by his Creator and Benefactor. But mankind being univerſally ſinners, and *as ſuch* infinitely unworthy; and what is more, totally averſe from what is required of them; no ſoul could be ſaved if the covenant in its *abſolute internal* form did not *enſure* the direction of its bleſſings to the intended perſons; as alſo a diſpoſition ſuited to their enjoyment. Thus, when God gave Adam and Eve an abſtract of his covenant of redemption,

redemption, which was absolute and infallible in its internal form as settled in the divine counsel; the *exhibition* of it was also *absolute*, both to *them* and *all those* of their posterity who should be informed of it: importing, that there was mercy with God that he might be feared. Yes, not less absolute than his covenant of the night and of the day; which no one, surely, will maintain was sealed, certified, confirmed, or made more absolute, by the *assent* and *submission* of man, to whom it was given. It was in that very display and promulgation of it an unspeakable blessing; and, as such, absolutely *obliged* them to suitable acknowledgments; previous to, and independent on any dispositions of the persons, whether good or bad. —— And not only so, but it is highly probable the institution of *sacrifices* was given to Adam, as a *seal* of the covenant, as well as a type of Christ. "For, (as WITSIUS observes) the *institutions* which commemorated sin, also signified and *sealed* the future expiation of it by the Messiah." * Again he says: "These *sacrifices* were *seals* of God's covenant. For though there is a difference between sacrifices and sacraments formally considered; because sacraments are given by God to men, but sacrifices are offered by men to God: nevertheless, there is no reason why the consideration of a sacrament and sacri-

* WITS. Oecon. Fœd. Lib. iii. Cap. iii. § x.

fice may not, in different reſpects concur in one and the ſame thing. For even ſacrifices are given by God to men, that is, are *inſtituted* by divine authority; that by theſe ceremonies, the coming of the Son of God in the fleſh, &c. might be ſignified and SEALED." †

2. NOT leſs abſolute was God's covenant or *free promiſe* to Noah, (which Dr. S. quaintly calls a "tranſaction between Him and Noah") that he would drown the world no more by a flood. This was a ſeaſonable *covenant* granted to Noah, to all mankind, and literally to *every creature* capable of the benefit; and particularly ſo, as it was an adumbration of the covenant of grace, or connected with it. But what is very remarkable is, that God's covenant to Noah, and his ſeed for ever, was confirmed and ſealed, by a token on the part of God *only*; independent of any conſent and *ſubmiſſion* on the part of Noah and his deſcendants. God made a covenant, and ſet his *bow in the cloud* as the confirming ſeal of it; but where was Noah's aſſent and ſubmiſſion, on behalf of himſelf, his poſterity, &c. to render the contract valid? For if it was a COVENANT made with all fleſh, ſhould it not, on the principle I am oppoſing, have the *conſent* of the parties contained in it, as the *impreſſion active*, before it could be ſaid to be ratified or ſealed to them? Rather I would aſk, is not the rainbow a ſign and

† Id. Lib. iv. Cap. vii. § vii.

and confirming seal of God's covenant not less to the atheistical philosopher than the grave divine? Nor should we suppose that fallen sinners are so far complimented, and that God's *institutions* are so liable to be degraded and nullified, as that nothing could be a *seal* of his covenant to men, but what they are pleased to make valid, by their *faith* and *submission*.

§ 26. 3. WHAT has been said of the dispensations of God's covenant to Adam and Noah, with their respective seals, is applicable to that publication of it made to Abraham; but with some remarkable circumstances of *limitation* in regard of the *additional blessings* exhibited, and the *superadded seal* of it, circumcision. The *former* were principally addressed to Abraham's descendants in the line of Isaac and Jacob, though not exclusively, for a gracious provision was made in favour of proselytes and their seed; and the *latter* was confined to Abraham's *male* descendants, and those of the proselytes. This restriction of the seal of the covenant, to be applied only to the males, was, we may be sure, founded on the wisest and justest reasons; and may be in some good measure accounted for, by attending to the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jews, in connection with the Saviour's incarnation. To investigate the particular reasons of this restriction, my present argument does not require. I would only add, that as the institution of sacrifices was a *seal* of the former dispensations of the covenant, and a part of family

family religion; we ought not to infer that Abraham's *female* deſcendants had *no ſeal* of God's covenant in common with the males. All that can be ſaid of them is, that they were deprived, by an expreſs reſtriction, of this *additional ſeal*, for reaſons the moſt proper; while they enjoyed every thing elſe in common. So far then ſhould we be from ſuppoſing, that a Jewiſh circumciſed *male* had not in his fleſh the ſeal of God's covenant, even from infancy; that I think it may be juſtly affirmed —— the *female* part was highly obliged to the divine goodneſs for what may be properly termed a *ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith*; — to *aſſure* them of bleſſings exhibited *to them*, and of their important obligations. If, therefore, God's COVENANT of redemption to fallen man, in its external form and manifeſtation, is nothing elſe but a DECLARATION *of ſovereign grace and a divine righteouſneſs*; which, in everlaſting tranſcendent love and compaſſion, is provided for the uſe and ſervice of wretched ſinners, who live within the pale of ſuch a declaration: and if to this God inſtitute a ſign, yet not a *mere* ſign, but a confirming token —— a demonſtrating *evidence* of the truth of what is teſtified, and of God's infallible, unchanging veracity —— be that ſign what it may, and directed to be applied or adminiſtered to the ſubjects of a diſpenſation indiſcriminately; or elſe *expreſsly reſtricted*, for wiſe and obvious reaſons, to a certain claſs, as in circumciſion

cision to the males only: is there not the greatest propriety in calling such a token THE SEAL of God's *covenant*, perfectly unconnected with and *independent* of the *faith* of the subject, as in the case of Jewish infants?

§ 27. BUT this is not all. The principle I am opposing, is fraught with an inconvenience little short of a gross absurdity. For this implies, "that circumcision became a seal or authentic *proof* of their justification, only to those of *riper* years, who, upon conviction of their judgment, *submitted* to that ordinance; and the same rule (our opponents contend) holds as to the ordinance of baptism." *This*, it is evident, the above quotations maintain, and the following proposition is the sum. "Then *only* may circumcision and baptism be termed *seals*, when they are PROOFS of justification to persons submitting to them."— Now I ask,

1. MAY we infer that a man is certainly in a justified state, and what is more, *assured* of his justification, *because he has submitted* to an instituted ordinance, such as circumcision or baptism? If not, how can his affixing his seal to the covenant, which according to Dr. S. must be matter of duty, be any *proof* to him of his justification? Previous to this *duty* of sealing the covenant, the performer must either be *assured* of his being in a justified state, or he is *not*: if the *former*, how can the observance of such an external right be a *proof* to him of his justification? What is designed it seems, for this external

external right to perform, has been *before* effected by other means. As a *proof* then it comes too late, if the perſon was aſſured of righteouſneſs antecedently. But if he was *not* aſſured previous to his performance of the duty, and yet was conſcious of no inſincerity of heart, is the mere addition of the performance of the duty a ſeal or certain proof to him that he is juſtified? It ſhould ſeem then that no perſon who ſubmits to baptiſm upon conviction, and who is conſcious of no hypocriſy, can be at a loſs to determine upon the goodneſs of his ſtate; for baptiſm is to him a *ſeal* whereby he may be certified of his juſtification. But if this be true, how comes it to paſs that any ſincere ſouls, who have made that ſubmiſſion, are yet haraſſed with fears and doubts reſpecting their ſtate? or, muſt we pronounce them all hypocrites and unſound, who heſitate about their intereſt in Chriſt, and maintain that, in this reſpect, he who doubteth is damned?

2. If it be ſaid, that baptiſm is a ſeal to thoſe only who have *real faith*, and that ſuch perſons *only* may be *aſſured* of juſtification and the conſequent bleſſings of the covenant; I reply, that then it follows, that baptiſm can be no ſeal to any but ſuch as have the aſſurance of faith: for if they doubt of the *reality* of their faith, they muſt proportionally doubt that baptiſm is a ſeal; and the conſequence will be, that ſince, on the principle I am oppoſing, baptiſm is a ſeal of the covenant as a *duty* performed by the believer.

liever, and on the part of God, an attestation of his interest in the blessings of the covenant; — God's attestation is no attestation to any who doubt of the reality of their faith, and so is a seal of a certainty that certifieth nothing!

3. THERE seems but one method of evading this conclusion; and that is, that however doubtful a person may be of his state before or at his baptism, yet, *after* he has submitted to the duty upon conviction, he may be *assured* of his interest in the blessings of the covenant. —— Yet this evasion is of no use, except we borrow for its aid another principle, which maintains, that the ordinance produces a real moral change in the subject, *ex opere operato*. For if it be said, that the certainty is obtained from God *after* we have in faith complied with a known duty, and from the consideration of our submitting to it *as such*; I would fain know how *this* rather than any *other* duty, enjoined by the same authority, becomes an *evidence* of our interest in covenant blessings? or, how we are *certified* of a divine attestation to our justification in any other way, than we may infer from any other christian duty whatever? Is it not absolutely inconceivable how baptism can be a *confirming seal* of our interest in Christ and his benefits, on the part of God, in any other sense than all other duties may be so termed when performed by faith? And if so, it follows from our opponents' own principles, and contrary to what Dr. S. maintains, that neither baptism nor circumcision

ſion can be any *diſtinguiſhing ſeals* at all, any more than any other moral duty performed in faith.

4. FROM the above conſiderations it muſt alſo follow, if Mr. B. and Dr. S. are right, that circumciſion could not be a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, even to Abraham himſelf, contrary to the Apoſtle's expreſs words, (Rom. iv. 11.) as an inſtitution; without a ſupperadded revealed aſſurance given him of the *reality* of his faith and ſubmiſſion. And thus we are driven, at length, to this concluſion, that circumciſion was no ſeal to Abraham or any of his deſcendants but in *conſequence* of the ſealing of the Spirit; and the purport of God's language to Abraham muſt be (Gen. xvii. 9—14.) "Though I enjoin upon thee, and thy ſeed after thee, the right of circumciſion as a token of the covenant betwixt me and you; yet it ſhall be no token of confirmation, no ſeal of the covenant at all, but to ſuch of you as have previouſly the infallible witneſs and ſealing of my Spirit, to certify you of the undoubted reality of your faith and ſubmiſſion. And obſerve further, that this honour is not to be extended to thy ſeed who ſhall be circumciſed in infancy; for, not having faith, it can be no ſeal to them: no, this honour is reſerved for thoſe who ſhall be bought with money of any ſtranger, or any proſelytes not of thy ſeed; and theſe muſt be ſealed by the Spirit, or have the certainty of their intereſt in the covenant, *before* they have any juſt grounds to conclude that circumciſion is

to

to them the seal of my covenant." But is this a declaration worthy of God?

5. It therefore follows, on Dr. S's hypothesis, that to be of the seed of Abraham, was a privilege not worthy to be compared with that of a proselyte. To Jacob and the patriarchs for instance, circumcision was not a seal of the covenant, for they had *no faith* when circumcised; but the proselyte of a day, who submitted to the rite upon conviction, had in his flesh a confirming seal of his justification. Had not a native Jew here an irresistible temptation to envy the proselyte? A Jewish master to envy the privilege of his servant bought with his money, even supposing their piety to be equal? How happy those children above others, who, through the neglect of their parents, or any other accident, were left uncircumcised in their minority; whereby they had an opportunity in *riper* years to *submit* to the important rite, and thereby of obtaining a *seal* of their justification!

§ 28. Aware of these inconveniences, Mr. B. avails himself of Dr. Lightfoot's version of Rom. iv. 11. and his remark upon it —— "A seal of the righteousness of the faith, which *should hereafter be* in uncircumcision. Which *should be*, not which *had been*." Why the Dr. should supply the elliptical passage (της εν τη ακροβυστια) *which in uncircumcision*, with a *should hereafter be*, requires no small critical discernment to determine.

I think it must be allowed by any impartial competent judge, that the supplied part of the sentence

ſentence is *far fetched*, and ſhould not be preferred without manifeſt neceſſity. The Vulgate Latin renders it —— *quæ* EST *in præputio*; the Syriac Verſion is rendered —— *quæ* FUERAT; the Arabic —— *quæ* ERAT; and the Æthiopic thus: *Et circumciſio ſignaculum juſtitiæ ejus fuit quam ei dedit, & ſignum ejus, ut ei innoteſceret de hoc, quod per fidem Deus juſtificaret Abraham cuum non fuit illo tempore circumciſus.* The *ſcope* of the paſſage is evidently this: The apoſtle in proſecution of his grand proof, that juſtification and eternal life are not obtained by human worthineſs, works or obſervances of our own, but are ſolely and abſolutely the fruit of ſovereign grace; ſhews that this doctrine, though more clearly revealed in the goſpel, was yet the common language of preceding diſpenſations. That this was the import of the *Jewiſh* diſpenſation, David teſtifieth, ver. 6. *Even as David alſo deſcribeth the bleſſedneſs of the man unto whom God imputeth righteouſneſs without works.* And that this method of acceptance through grace and a divine righteouſneſs, was not *peculiar* to the circumciſion, but belongs to the uncircumciſion alſo; appears from the hiſtory of Abraham, whom the Jews were ſo ready to boaſt of on every occaſion. Ver. 9. *Cometh this bleſſedneſs then upon the circumciſion* ONLY, *or upon the uncircumciſion* ALSO? *For we ſay that faith* (as contradiſtinguiſhed from works or any manner of worthineſs of his own) *was reckoned to Abraham for righteouſneſs.* Ver. 10. *How was it then*

then reckoned? When he was in circumciſion, or in uncircumciſion? Not in circumciſion, but in uncircumciſion. Ver. 11. *And* (Και) as a following conſideration, many years after the righteouſneſs of faith was made known to him, *he received the ſign of circumciſion, a SEAL of the righteouſneſs of the faith which* (the *relative* having a reſpect either to the antecedent *faith* or *righteouſneſs* *) he had (or, poſſeſſed) *in uncircumciſion*; that uncircumciſed ſtate juſt ſpoken of. That the phraſe, εν τη ακροβυστια, refers to Abraham's uncircumciſed *ſtate* rather than to the *Gentiles*, in this place, may appear from what immediately follows. To the intent *that he might be the father of* ALL *believers*, — a conſpicuous example to Jews and Gentiles that juſtification is not the conſequence of ceremonial obſervances, or any human merit, worthineſs or conſideration whatever; —(δι ακροβυστιας) *thro' uncircumciſion*, — by reaſon of his being the favourite of God in his uncircumciſed ſtate, as well as after; — to the end *that righteouſneſs might be imputed unto them* ALSO. Ver. 12. *And that he might be the father of circumciſion*, — that is, of ſpiritual circumciſion; (an inconteſtible inſtance that the *bleſſings exhibited* in and by that rite, and of which circumciſion was the *ſeal*, were not intended for chriſtian gentiles excluſively, but had reſpect

* *Quæ* (ambiguum eſt, & referendum, vel 1. ad fidem: vel potius, 2. ad juſtitiam fidei, h. e. quam ex fide exceperat) *eſt in præputio.* Eſtius.— *Fidei quæ* (vel, *quæ* fuerat; Eraſmus, Pagninus, Tremellius, Flaccius Illyricus, &c. vel, *receptæ*, Beza, Piſcator; vel, *quam* habuiſſe dignoſcitur, Zegerius) *in præputio.* POLI Synop. in loc.

reſpect) *to them who are not of the circumciſion* O N L Y, *but alſo walk in the ſteps of that faith of our Father Abraham, which he had* (εν τη ακροβυστια) *being yet uncircumciſed.* —— Thus the Apoſtle cuts off boaſting on either ſide. The Jew had no ground to ſlight the Gentile, nor the Gentile to ſlight the Jew. The grace of the covenant was exhibited and applied to Abraham *before* circumciſion; and yet circumciſion was inſtituted as a ſign and ſeal of the ſame grace, righteouſneſs, or covenant, to the Jew. I would further remark —— as juſt criticiſm requires, that ſimilar renderings ſhould be given to ſimilar phraſes in the ſame connection, it ſeems an unaccountable liberty to render the ſame phraſe, εν τη ακροβυστια, in ver. 11. as referring to the *Gentiles*, which in ver. 12. *muſt* be referred to Abraham's *ſtate* of uncircumciſion; while at the ſame time there is no pretended neceſſity for ſuch a variation.

§ 29. Thus, I think, we may pronounce Mr. B's favourite interpretation of the paſſage in queſtion — far-fetched and unneceſſary. But ſuppoſing he were indulged with Lightfoot's critical weapon, I preſume it would be but of little ſervice to him; ſince there is another conſideration that ſo blunts it, as to render it perfectly innoffenſive.

Now ſuppoſing, without granting, that Abraham's circumciſion being a ſeal to him, that the Gentiles ſhould, in ſome after period, be juſtified by faith, were the meaning of the controverted

verted text; what is the consequence? Why, if ver. 11. implies that he received a seal to assure him that righteousness, (or by a periphrasis, the righteousness of faith) would be imputed to the future Gentiles without ceremonial observances, works or worthiness of their own; ver. 12. must in like manner, from the *connection* of the two verses, necessarily imply, that he had the same confirming seal to assure him of the same important truth in relation to the Jews. He received a seal, of what? Of righteousness. What kind of righteousness? That which is of faith, as opposed to legal observances, works, merit, or worthiness of the creature. Who should be the happy objects of this favour? The uncircumcision; suppose the Gentiles. But to what end was such a seal given to Abraham?

1. *That he might be the father*, or the appointed and highly honoured pattern, of *all among the Gentiles* in the most distant periods, who should obtain righteousness and salvation of *free and sovereign grace*, exclusive of works of righteousness which they should do. Thus it was that he received mercy, without any works of the law; and therefore properly stiled the *father* of all among the Gentiles who should have no pretensions at all to any ceremonial and legal righteousness of their own. And was this the *only* design of his receiving circumcision as a seal? Far from it, for,

2. ANOTHER

2. ANOTHER very important one is immediately ſubjoined, ver. 12. AND that he might be *the father of circumciſion*, a SIMILAR PATTERN to the *Jews alſo*, that none of them may truſt to the law, ceremonies, or any other conſideration: and thoſe among them who were beholden to mercy, as Abraham was, without works, were his CHILDREN in the ſame ſenſe as the gracious among the Gentiles are. Thus it appears, that circumciſion was to Abraham a SEAL *of the righteouſneſs of faith*, or of *free grace*, not more to the Gentiles than the Jews; and conſequently, Mr. B's attempt, to confine the purport of circumciſion as a ſeal, with reference to *Gentiles only*, proves abortive.

§ 30. OUR laſt inquiry reſpected the perſons *concerning whom* Abraham received a ſeal; but now another queſtion returns, viz. *To whom* circumciſion was a ſeal of righteouſneſs? Mr. B's reply is ſhort and plain, "To Abraham *in particular*." * Herein, however, he differs from Dr. S. For thus the latter writes: "Though I object to the idea of circumciſion's being a *ſeal* of the covenant, at leaſt in regard of infants, and underſtand the paſſage juſt referred to as only ſaying, that it became to Abraham, and by conſequence to all others who believed, a ſeal or atteſtation to their juſtification; yet I readily admit, that it was a *ſign* or *token* of the covenant between God and Abraham in all who were

* P. 373.

were circumcised †." And a little after: "Circumcision, though it became a seal of the righteousness of faith to Abraham, could not be a *seal* to his *infant* posterity, at least in the same sense it was to him." — In conformity to this principle he further adds, "It is easy to see that baptism cannot be a *seal* of the righteousness of faith, that is, of their *justification*, to infants, they not having *faith*: nor can it be in regard of them a test of new obedience, they not *voluntarily submitting* to it."

But have these assertions any foundation in scripture or reason? And,

1. Is there any truth in the supposition, That nothing can be a test of new obedience, or lay us under additional obligations of duty, without our *voluntary submission?* Is not this singular notion, so much insisted on by our adversaries, confronted with the fundamental principles of morals? For it is demonstrable, from the nature and spring of moral obligation, that if baptism be a *benefit* to infants, as we maintain, it must be to them such a test, or *obliges* them to *additional* duties. —— Again, I would ask,

2. Is there any propriety in the supposition — because infants cannot *believe*, they therefore cannot be *justified?* or what amounts to the same — because infants have not actual *faith*, *therefore* their *justification* cannot be *sealed?* But all this stands on another rotten pillar —— that there is no difference between a seal being *applied*

† S's Answer to A. p. 108.

plied to a perſon, and the *certainty* of his actual juſtification. On the contrary, is it not abundantly evident, that God's covenant of redemption, AS REVEALED TO FALLEN MAN, is of the nature of a gracious proclamation? If ſo, what neceſſity is there to ſuppoſe, that there can be no *ſealing* of ſuch a covenant to any perſon without thereby certifying his juſtification? May not the Eternal Sovereign inſtitute a *memorial* of his mercy which endureth from generation to generation; to the intent, that every loſt ſinner to whom it is duly adminiſtered, may be certified, as far as any thing ſhort of a miracle can do, that this gracious God does actually and inceſſantly exhibit *to him* the bleſſings of his covenant —— with the merciful deſign to encourage his future faith, and to engage his grateful obedience?

3. MAY we not ſay, that ſuch an inſtitution is the *ſeal* of God's covenant, without ſuppoſing the efficacious *grace* of the covenant experienced by the ſealed? For, *who* ſeals? God, by his commiſſioned miniſters.—— *What* does he ſeal? His own gracious proclamation, exhibited to the ſubject. — The voice of God's heralds is to this purpoſe: "Now then we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, publiſhing to a loſt world, the moſt merciful terms of reconciliation: and if any ſuſpect the *truth* of our meſſage, or the *faithfulneſs* of our divine maſter, behold both ratified with his own SEAL!" —— I ſuppoſe it has been proved, that circumciſion *was* not deſigned, nor indeed *could* be

be, to Abraham or any other, as a *proof* of actual justification, without involving a great absurdity. Therefore,

4. It must be a seal, AS AN INSTITUTED RITE, which God affixed to his covenant. This *must* be its purport in reference to Abraham, as far as it *assured* him of any thing; nor can it be denied, that in *this* sense, which I think is demonstrably the true one, it *ought* to be considered, in regard of every individual subject of it. — Thus the twelve patriarchs, for instance, had in their flesh, not only a *sign*, but a *seal* also of God's covenant: purporting, that he thereby proposed himself *to be to them a God*; that they, in return, *may be to him a people*. The fact of the institution, sealing the covenant, and not their personal qualifications of any kind, was the *ground* of their obligation; and this *increased* with their years. When grown up they might thus reflect: "By this mark in our persons, we are *assured*, "in consequence of what the Lord said to our "father Abraham, that he is graciously willing "to become, not only the object of our wor-"ship, but our all-sufficient portion. And, sure-"ly, this consideration obliges us, incontestibly, "to become his people,—to love and serve him "with all our powers."—— But will any one say, that circumcision was not *to them* a seal? or not without their devout approbation of it? That cannot be, except we maintain this absurd position, That the very essence of a divine institution depends on the precarious determination of

the ſinful creature. This, however, is in perfect conſiſtence with another poſition, equally abſurd, viz. That what we do not *voluntarily ſubmit* to, cannot be to us a teſt of new obedience.

§ 31. FROM what has been ſaid, we infer, that the hypotheſis which maintains — infants were not *ſealed* by circumciſion, becauſe of their not having *faith*, or not *ſubmitting* to it upon conviction, — is untenable. Yet, as our opponents have treated this ſubject with undeſerved contempt, we ſhall, *ex abundanti*, take another turn with them.

Now, if circumciſion was a ſeal of righteouſneſs to Abraham, and not to the infant ſubjects of it in the *ſame ſenſe*, it muſt be owing—either, to their being *incapable* — or, to ſome *difference* in the original *inſtitution*, ſpecified or implied— or, to ſome ſcripture evidence whereby this diſtinction is made neceſſary. I affirm, then, in general,

THAT none of theſe coſiderations, nor any other ſufficient reaſon whatever, can ſhew the *neceſſity* of the pretended *diſtinction*. Now, the queſtion is not, Whether or no circumciſion, as a ſtanding rite, had *other uſes* of an eccleſiaſtical or political nature; but, Whether it was a *ſeal*, on God's part, to circumciſed infants? The former is not diſputed; and therein it agrees with the inſtitution of ſacrifices, which were not only a type of the Meſſiah's atonement, but, in a ſecondary view, anſwered the end of a tribute, to ſupport the prieſthood. Nobody, I preſume, will

will deny, but one inſtitution may, by divine appointment, ſubſerve *various* purpoſes — moral, typical, eccleſiaſtical, and political; as numerous inſtances in the Jewiſh œconomy ſupport the fact. Therefore, to enumerate ſeveral purpoſes, for which we may ſuppoſe circumciſion was inſtituted, *beſides* that of a ſeal of righteouſneſs, is impertinent; when intended to conclude againſt the idea of its being a ſeal to infants. Yet Dr. S. expatiates largely upon the different uſes of circumciſion, as a reaſon why it was not a ſeal of the covenant to infants. But how ſhall we reconcile the following paſſages with truth, or with each other? "As to circumciſion, it was a *token* of the covenant between God and Abraham. — But what was the *purport* of that tranſaction? I readily agree, that the *grand* object of it was the coming of the Meſſiah, and our redemption by him; on which account the goſpel is ſaid to have been preached unto Abraham. But this ſurely was not the *only* object of it *." And again: "Thoſe matters in the covenant between God and Abraham, which ſeem to be the *chief*, if not the *only* ground or reaſon of circumciſion, and which that rite was peculiarly adapted to expreſs, are matters to which *baptiſm* hath no reference at all †." Has baptiſm, then, *no reference at all* to our redemption by Chriſt? Or, is it concluſive to infer, that becauſe the coming of the Meſſiah, and our redemption by him, was the *grand object* of

 circumciſion

* Dr. STENNETT's Anſwer to Dr. ADDINGTON, p. 112.
† Ibid. p. 118.

circumcision, but not the *only* one; therefore, it was not a seal of righteousness to infants?

§ 32. CONSIDERING circumcision as an instituted rite, designed to afford the strongest evidence, that righteousness was attainable *only* as a free favour —— that it was God's *seal*, as the impression active of his authority, administered by his servants; attesting, not that the subject is actually possessed of the spiritual blessings represented by it, (for *this* no external rite whatever is capable of, as before shewn, § 27.) but, that it is the divine pleasure to *exhibit* therein to him the blessings of his covenant — that the fact of an exhibited *benefit*, lays earliest infancy under obligations of future returns (§ 22.) — considering, I say, these things, it is evident,

1. THAT infants were CAPABLE of circumcision as a seal; if not, we must say, that the incapacity lay either in their apparent *state*, or in their want of a professed *subjection*. But *neither* of these is *essential* to being the subjects of the seal of God's covenant; and therefore are required qualifications in certain circumstances only, viz. in persons who are capable of dissenting and rejecting, as well as assenting and submitting. If any again insist, that the concurrence of the subject is absolutely necessary to constitute the sealing, as this must be on the part of God and the creature; this would be only objecting to the sense, in which I have explicitly declared I understand the term and notion of sealing; and which I think is demonstrably the only consist-

tent

tent sense in which it can be taken in reference to the institution either of circumcision or baptism. For the *general* thesis under consideration, requires me only to shew — That there is a proper and consistent sense in which *any* divine ordinance intended to *exhibit* the blessings of the covenant, and to *oblige* the subject to a cordial reception of them, and other answerable returns, *may* be termed a SEAL *of the covenant:* and that baptism, being proved an ordinance of that nature, is properly denominated *such a seal.* And the argument under present consideration is — That *such* an ordinance, is *equally applicable* to infants and adults; and, therefore, that no pretended incapacity in the Jewish infants could be a sufficient reason why circumcision was not to *them* as well as *Abraham* a seal of righteousness. Let any one, therefore, reflect in what sense I understand the word *seal,* and he may immediately perceive the validity of this branch of the argument, that infants are *not incapable* subjects of it.

§ 33. 2. BUT tho' circumcised infants were thus *capable* of having the *seal* of God's covenant in their flesh, is there not something in the INSTITUTION ITSELF, whereby it appears, that circumcision was a *seal* to Abraham, while it was only a *token* to his infant seed? I think not. The words are very express and particular. Gen. xvii. 7. " And I will *establish my covenant* between me and thee, AND THY SEED AFTER THEE, in their generations, for an ever-

laſting covenant; TO BE A GOD UNTO THEE, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE. ver. 8. — AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD. ver. 9. And God ſaid unto Abraham, Thou ſhalt keep my covenant therefore, THOU AND THY SEED AFTER THEE, in their generations. ver. 10. This is my covenant, which YE ſhall keep between me and YOU, AND THY SEED AFTER THEE; EVERY MAN CHILD AMONG YOU ſhall be circumciſed. ver. 11. — And it ſhall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and YOU. ver. 13. — And my covenant ſhall be in YOUR fleſh for an everlaſting covenant." On theſe words I obſerve,

(1.) THAT Abraham and his ſeed are here conſidered as one aggregate body, as well as in ſtrict conjunction. God not only addreſſes Abraham in theſe terms, reſpecting the covenant and its token, " thee AND thy ſeed," which abundantly ſhews a *ſimilarity* of deſign in their direction to Abraham's *ſeed* as well as to himſelf; but they are alſo addreſſed in theſe collective terms, YE, YOU, YOUR, without any diſcriminating clauſe. There is, therefore, in the inſtitution itſelf no ground of diſtinction, why circumciſion ſhould be a *ſeal* to Abraham and not to his ſeed, of which the latter were equally capable.

(2.) THE grand covenant *bleſſing exhibited* to Abraham, extends *equally* to his ſeed. I will eſtabliſh my covenant —— to be A GOD unto thee

thee AND to thy ſeed after thee. And I will be THEIR GOD.

(3.) THE *obligations reſulting* from the inſtitution are the *ſame* to Abraham and his ſeed. For God ſaid unto Abraham, "Thou ſhalt KEEP my covenant therefore, THOU, AND THY SEED. This is my covenant, which YE SHALL KEEP between me and you." There was not indeed an *application* of grace to all the circumciſed alike, but there was an *exhibition*, and the *obligation* was general.

§ 34. IT has been confidently aſſerted by our opponents, as before obſerved, "That there were *other* ends, uſes, and ſignifications of circumciſion to Abraham's own perſon, than thoſe for which it was diſpenſed to his ſeed; ſuch as — that he ſhould be the father of all believers — that his ſeed ſhould inherit Canaan — that Chriſt ſhould come out of his loins." From whence they infer, "That the covenant of circumciſion, *in every* of thoſe reſpects in which circumciſion was given Abraham as a *ſeal* of it, was not given to all the Jews and their children: nay, which his ſeed (indefinitely) had no promiſe of at all *." But is there any thing in theſe dogmatical aſſertions better than magiſterial trifling? For,

1. To ſay that circumciſion was a *ſeal* of Abraham's *fatherhood* of all believers, or of his ſeed inheriting Canaan, is directly contrary to the apoſtle's aſſertion, that it was a ſeal of the *righteouſneſs of faith*. That theſe particulars were

* FISHER's Chriſtianiſmus Redivivus, p. 18, 19.

included as *inferior* parts of the Abrahamic charter, is granted; but it is abſurd to make them ſynonymous with the righteouſneſs of faith; which our opponents muſt do to be conſiſtent. Nor is it *true*, that the promiſe of Canaan was *peculiar* to Abraham, in any other ſenſe than that he was *foremoſt* upon the liſt. See Gen. xvii. 19. chap. xxviii. 13—15. Was not Jehovah a God to Iſaac and his ſeed, and to Jacob and his ſeed, as well as to Abraham and his ſeed; and in the *very ſame* reſpect? And, ſays the Lord to Jacob, in the paſſage laſt cited, "The land whereon thou lieſt, TO THEE WILL I GIVE IT, AND TO THY SEED." Seeing, then, that this divine charter includes Abraham and millions of his deſcendants *in common*; and, as before ſhewn, without any ground of difference; and ſeeing the ſame charter has been confirmed, to Iſaac and Jacob, and their ſeed—to make the circumſtance of Abraham's *priority* on the liſt of perſons benefited by the grant, the foundation of the pretended diſtinction, is to the laſt, nugatory and impertinent.

2. To urge that the clauſe "of Chriſt's coming out of his loins," was a privilege *peculiar* to Abraham, in ſuch a ſenſe as that circumciſion was to *him* a *ſeal* of it, but not to his ſeed; is equally futile. For tho' it was granted him, that he ſhould be the progenitor of Chriſt; yet it was ſaid to Jacob as well, "IN THEE, AND IN THY SEED SHALL ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED." Nor muſt

must we confound Abraham's *carnal privilege* with the *righteousness of faith*. Circumcision is said to be a seal of the *latter* expressly, but not of the *former*; nor does there appear any reason or propriety in saying that the carnal privilege was sealed to Abraham, but so far as it was subservient to the Saviour's infinite and everlasting righteousness. Thus it appears, that as infants were *capable* of circumcision as a *seal*, so there is abundant evidence from the *institution itself*, that it was equally applicable to them as to Abraham.

§ 35. HOWEVER unfavourable to the purpose of Antipœdobaptists might be the institution itself of circumcision, were there notwithstanding any *other* producible evidence from a subsequent divine statute in their favour, it would alter the case proportionably. But this, I believe, is what none of those whose interest it is to produce it, attempt to do; except Rom. iv. 11. which has been already considered; and I think fairly shewn from the scope and design of the apostle, to be inconsistent with their confined view of it. The apostle's argument is, that both Jews and Gentiles are justified by the same divine righteousness, and not by the observance of any law whatever, or any worthiness of their own: now, is it any thing else but ridiculous trifling to contend, and still worse to make the apostle maintain, that the inestimable privilege of *righteousness imputed without works* is COMMON to Jews

and Gentiles, BECAUSE circumcision was to Abraham ALONE a seal of righteousness?

THERE is, indeed, another passage that has been occasionally subpœnaed to serve this tottering cause; and that is, John vi. 27. *Him hath God the Father sealed.* "In the same sense," says the author last quoted, "in which the Father is said to *seal* the Son, to be the giver of meat that endures to eternal life, i. e. authorised to that business, honoured with that office, is God said to give circumcision to Abraham, whereby to seal him up, and settle him for ever in that glorious title, viz. *The father of all that believe*; in which sense circumcision was never given to any one of Abraham's posterity at all*." To this I reply,

THAT there were in use among the ancients sealings for *different* purposes, as before observed; and a *person* may be said to be sealed when he receives a *commission*, is invested with *authority*, or bears well authenticated *credentials*, &c. And thus was Christ sealed of the Father. His miracles were inconteſtible proofs of his divine mission. But how does this help the notion, that neither Isaac, Jacob, or any other beside Abraham, received circumcision as a seal? For where is it said or implied, that God *sealed Abraham?* It is said, indeed, that he *received* the sign of circumcision, a seal of righteousness. But who would infer, that because a promise, a law, or a sacred rite, was *received* by an individual for the use and service of himself and

* Ibid.

and his poſterity; it muſt ſignify one thing to the firſt receiver, and another thing to all the reſt; when no ſuch diſtinction is intimated, and when the caſe does not require it? Is it reaſonable to conclude, that, when a perſon *receives* a certain privilege for himſelf and his heirs, collectively and indefinitely, it has one meaning when it regards himſelf, and another when it refers to his heirs; where there is no manner of neceſſity for ſuch an interpretation? Would any one conclude, that becauſe Moſes *received* the law for himſelf and the Iſraelites, it ſpoke to *him* one thing, to *them* another? —— Finally; I conclude it muſt appear to the impartial reader of the preceding pages, that the rite of circumciſion, CONSIDERED AS A DIVINE INSTITUTION, was appointed to all the ſubjects of it, indiſcriminately, a SEAL of the *righteouſneſs of faith*; viz. a declarative and *certifying* token that a man, whether Jew or Gentile, is juſtified by faith, as oppoſed to merit or worthineſs of his own; or *ſaved by grace*. And I preſume, it muſt further appear highly proper, to term circumciſion a *ſeal* from the very NATURE of the inſtitution; as it moſt aſſuredly *exhibited* the grand bleſſings of the everlaſting covenant, and was attended with ſuitable *obligations**. And moreover,

* As to what ſome have urged from Acts xv. 10. where circumciſion is called *a yoke*, and Gal. v. 3. where the circumciſed are repreſented as *debtors to do the whole law*; it is manifeſt that nothing can be fairly concluded againſt what has been here advanced; ſince theſe paſſages refer, not to the NATURE and

over, ſince the ordinance of chriſtian baptiſm, *exhibits* the ſame ſpiritual and principal bleſſings, with the ſame infallible certainty, and *obliges* to ſimilar correſponding duties; it follows, that baptiſm is properly and ſtrictly a *ſeal* of the chriſtian covenant, or the exceeding great and precious promiſes of the goſpel, to every perſon, indiſcriminately, to whom it is duly adminiſtered, and may be ſo denominated *from its very* NATURE.

§ 36. FROM what has been ſaid reſpecting the *nature* of baptiſm and of circumciſion, and the propriety of calling them *ſeals of the covenant of grace*; it follows, that there is an equal propriety in calling the *Lord's ſupper* a SEAL; as it is a divine inſtitution in the church, moſt aſſuredly *exhibiting* the great bleſſings of the covenant, and *obliging* the ſubjects to anſwerable returns of gratitude and obedience.

§ 37. (3.) ANOTHER general concluſion from the nature and deſign of baptiſm is, That the actual unworthineſs of miniſter or ſubject has no invalidating influence on the bleſſings and obligations repreſented in the ordinance. For if baptiſm be a *ſeal*, and does really repreſent the aforementioned particulars, *as a divinely inſtituted ordinance*, neither the holineſs nor the ſinfulneſs

and genuine deſign of circumciſion, but to the ABUSE and perverſion of it by legaliſts. Paul himſelf circumciſed Timothy; but did this champion for ſovereign grace, and goſpel liberty, put on his neck a yoke, which, in its proper nature, uſe and tendency, ſubjected him to legal bondage? Surely not.

ness of the *minister* can alter its nature and design; for to suppose it a seal to a proper subject when administered by a *good* man, but not so if by a *bad* man; is to rest the validity of a divine ordinance on a basis totally unworthy of God. It would also render the *baptized* liable to constant doubt and suspense, nay, absolute uncertainty, whether he has received the seal of God's covenant or not, in proportion as the moral state of the administrator was not certainly known; which inconvenience would be a source of perpetual confusion in the church; and therefore the supposition is inadmissible for the clearest and strongest reasons. Again: to suppose that baptism, duly administered, is a seal only to the *true believer* and not to *other* baptized persons as well, is attended with the same inconvenience. For if baptism be valid and a seal to none but *true believers*, none but such can infer, that any benefits are exhibited to *them* in particular *as baptized*, or that any consequent and answerable *obligations* are thereby incurred; and it also follows, that altho' the subject be a *true believer*, yet if he do not *know* it, or have not a *certainty* that he is so; he must be proportionably at a loss whether the ordinance be or be not to him a mere nullity. For, on the supposition, it is not the *truth* but the *assurance* of faith, can enable him to draw the inference, that he is in consequence of his baptism under any additional obligations of duty. But how absurd to say, that none are thus *obliged* except they

they are *aſſured* of the truth and reality of their faith!

§ 38. (4.) FROM what has been ſaid we may draw another corrollary, viz. That for any perſon to deſire *rebaptization* (I mean, on ſuppoſition of agreement about the mode) from a pretence that he was not properly qualified for his former baptiſm, or cannot recollect it, or was not active and voluntary in it; is virtually to deny that goſpel bleſſings are at all exhibited therein *to him*, and that his baptiſm did lay him under any obligations of duty reſulting from this inſtitution, *becauſe* he was not *then* duly qualified. But I think it has been demonſtrated, that conſent is no neceſſary prerequiſite of future obligation — that an adminiſtrator of baptiſm has a diſcretionary power of determining who is a qualified ſubject and who not — that no unworthineſs in miniſter or ſubject renders the baptiſmal act a nullity; — for a perſon, therefore, who has been baptized before properly, as to the *manner*, by a goſpel miniſter, under the aforeſaid pretence of non-conſent, &c. to be *rebaptized*, or to *deſire* it, is wrong, unreaſonable and unſcriptural. This being the caſe, is not a deſire in any to *make void* the firſt, that they may *ſubmit* upon *conviction* to another baptiſm, which they apprehend requires them to make an open teſtimony of their allegiance to Chriſt; too much like the ſubject of a ſtate, who deſires to *rebel* againſt his

his sovereign, by a temporary withdrawing of his allegiance, tho' introduced into his kingdom when an infant — that he might have the pleasure of *submitting upon conviction* to the legal and rightful authority of his sovereign? For, if baptism *does* lay every person, however unworthy, that has been baptized by a christian teacher, under the obligation appertaining to that ordinance; to renounce, *that* baptism, is to renounce *its* obligation; and consequently to rebel: and this *rebellion* is for the specious, but spurious, reason of personally, openly and fully acknowledging *future allegiance!* Again: Is not this desire of *rebaptization* too much like that of a person who enjoys the privileges, and even *seals* of friendship, on another's part; but who has a mind to introduce a *quarrel*, by declaring that he has been hitherto under no *obligation* to his friend on account of any *former* seal of his friendly disposition and conduct, to the intent — that he may, after the quarrel was made up, take occasion to *profess* his friendship to his benefactor!

I WOULD here remark, that it is pretty evident from the natural dictates of conscience, that one who rejects christianity after he has been baptized *in due form* in his infant state, and brought up in a christian family, is in a more *wretched condition* than an infidel who has not been *so devoted* to God. Nor is this a begging of the question, but an appeal to the common notices and impartial practical conclusions of mankind

mankind. Let but an intelligent apoſtate reflect, that IF what is repreſented in baptiſm be *true*, however unfit he was to comprehend and receive it; whether or not his *guilt*, in renouncing chriſtianity, would be the *greater* on account of his having been recognized by baptiſm a ſubject of Chriſt's kingdom? I verily believe there is no ſenſible perſon of that deſcription, but muſt conclude, from an attentive regard to the nature and deſign of the ordinance, that he incurs *additional* blame, (ſuppoſing chriſtianity to be *true)*, in conſequence of his infant baptiſm. This then argues, on the ſuppoſition, a *benefit* received, and *obligation* incurred; for otherwiſe there could be no ground of blame. If a goſpel miniſter, who has a *diſcretionary* commiſſion relative to the fitneſs and qualification of an admiſſible ſubject, *judge* (ſuppoſing, for argument ſake, he were under ſome miſtake as to his determination of fitneſs) that an *infant*, in ſome caſes, may be baptized according to the nature and deſign of the ordinance, and the inſtitutor's intention; muſt this *act* of a diſcretionary commiſſion, and, I will boldly aſſert, an act conſiſtent with the ſtricteſt ſincerity of determination, regarding the glory of God, the will of the Redeemer, and the good of the ſubject, — muſt this act be deemed a mere nullity? When the baptized afterwards reflects upon the fact, muſt he conclude, that becauſe it was done without his conſent, therefore he is not *obliged* by it as true baptiſm? For an anſwer to this queſtion, I appeal, not to

to the passions, but to the rational powers, and deliberate impartial judgment, of thousands who love their Lord and his authority more than their own lives; and doubt not that their reply is, WE ARE UNDER OBLIGATIONS, even all those which result from the ordinance, as a divine institution. When I express my own sentiments on this head, those of my brethren will be echoed; and they are these, — I look upon my baptism as exhibiting to me incessantly the forementioned blessings, and find my conscience constrained to answerable obligations of love, gratitude and obedience, and all the particulars abovementioned. I have a rational certainty of the fact, and I am *certain* (pardon the expression) that the action of a professional minister pouring water upon me, when an infant, in the name of the Father, &c. does really and *truly* oblige my conscience according to our Lord's intention in christian baptism. Nor can I conceive of baptism answering the ends of exhibiting and obliging *more truly and powerfully* if administered this very day, than in earliest infancy; of its having any better moral tendency, or being better calculated to strengthen faith or administer comfort *. For if I cordially

* "Sacraments were never intended by God to exert their virtue only *in* or *during* the administration For then it would follow, that the baptism once received, at whatever age, is no further to be improved by the party receiving it; and so, either baptism must be altogether a barren sacrament all our lives, but only during the little time of its administration: or else to *renew the* BENEFIT thereof, we must often *renew the administration* itself." Dr. FORD's Practical use of Infant Baptism. Dial. ii. p. 10.

dially and morally approve of this tranſaction, of which I was confeſſedly a *capable* ſubject, performed thirty or forty years ago, and on ſuppoſition that it is to be done but once in my life time, I am at a loſs to conceive, why it may not anſwer every valuable purpoſe in reflecting upon and approving the fact, as if done this day. If it be a *fact* that I was *baptized into Chriſt*, in the ſenſe before explained, as I am perſwaded it is, the obligation to *put on Chriſt* is inceſſant and perpetual, and not at all weakened but rather *ſtrengthened* by the diſtance of time.

§ 39. (5.) THOSE, whether ancients or moderns, who ſuppoſe a *real communication* of ſpiritual bleſſings *conſtantly attendant* on the ordinance of baptiſm, are under a miſtake, if a juſt account of its nature and deſign has been given in the preceding pages. For there we find, that what the inſtitution does *infallibly*, is to *exhibit* bleſſings, and *oblige* to duties; but as to any moral and ſpiritual favour *communicated* by it, this we ſhould refer, not to any virtue in the duty, or any *certain connection* between this and any ſuppoſed favour, but to the *ſovereign pleaſure* of the God of means. Much leſs have we ground to infer that baptiſm is the true chriſtian *regeneration*, or that a certain *immortalizing ſpirit* is imparted with it, as ſome have whimſically affirmed.

§ 40. (6.) FROM an attentive and impartial ſurvey of the nature and deſign of baptiſm, deduced from all the paſſages of the New Teſta-

ment

ment relating to it, we may again infer, That to make the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ the *only* or even the *principal* FACTS represented in the ordinance, is partial and unjust. Mr. B's third chapter is entitled, "The DESIGN of Baptism; Or the Facts and Blessings represented by it, both in regard to our Lord, and his Disciples." And under this title he musters together no less than *fifty six* pædobaptist writers; who, having made some *concessions* respecting the propriety and expressiveness of immersion to represent the facts of Christ's *death*, *burial* and *resurrection*, he imagines greatly assist his cause. It appears that the chief reason of these concessions was their supposing the apostle, Rom. vi. 3 — 6, and Col. ii. 11 — 13. alluded to the mode of *dipping* the subject when baptized. But is there any *necessity* for such a supposed allusion? or is that the most *natural* and *significant* import of these texts? I think not; but am of opinion with Mr. HENRY's Continuator (and more than *fifty six* others that might be collected, were the controversy to be decided by *numbers*, as certainly it is not) that the allusion is not to any *mode* of baptism whatever, but to a *spiritual disposition* to which baptism as a divine institution, *obliges* the subject. "Why this burying in baptism should *so much as allude* to any custom of dipping under water in baptism, any more than our *baptismal crucifixion* and death should have any such reference, I confess, I cannot see. It is plain, that it is not the *sign*, but the *thing signified*

nified in baptiſm, that the apoſtle here calls being buried with Chriſt; and the expreſſion of *burying* alludes to *Chriſt's* burial."—— And again, "We are both buried, and riſen with him; and both are ſignified by our baptiſm; not that there is any thing in the *ſign* or ceremony of baptiſm, which repreſents this burying and riſing, any more than the crucifixion of Chriſt is repreſented by any *viſible reſemblance* in the Lord's ſupper ‖." In addition to this, and what was ſaid before on theſe paſſages (§ 18, 19, of this chapter) I would propoſe it to any impartial perſon, acquainted with the nature of the myſtical union between Chriſt and his church, of which Paul often ſpeaks, whether it is not a ſtrict and weighty truth, — that every chriſtian, tho' UNBAPTIZED, is *dead*, *buried* and *riſen* with Chriſt? and, as baptiſm is an *initiatory* ordinance, repreſenting theſe things *in common* with various *other* momentous facts of a *quite different* nature, whether it is not *moſt natural* to conclude, that the Apoſtle in theſe places urges a *particular branch* of duty, of being *conformed to Chriſt's death* &c. from the GENERAL NATURE of the exhibitory rite, however adminiſtered, and not that he ſhould preſs them to the ſame duty from the ſuppoſed *manner* of adminiſtration? And is not the *former* a topic far more noble and powerful than the *latter*, to anſwer the apoſtle's grand deſign?

§ 41. BUT, it may be objected, "Suppoſing the

‖ HENRY's Commentary on the Rom. vi. 4 and Col. ii. 12.

any *correſpondency* between the ſign and the things that are ſignified by it; immerſion *muſt* be the mode of adminiſtration †." Here is a bold concluſion drawn from premiſes couched under three hypothetical propoſitions; the *ſecond*, I preſume, is ſufficiently enervated already; to the *firſt* and the *third* I ſhall make the following replies. And,

1. I AFFIRM there does not appear, from any thing ſaid in the New Teſtament or any thing urged by Mr. B. that the *death*, *burial*, and *reſurrection* of Chriſt are the PRINCIPAL facts deſigned to be repreſented in baptiſm. For, if no paſſages of ſcripture are adduced, nor any conſideration urged by our author to ſupport his concluſion, except the two places above mentioned; — and if the direct meaning of theſe paſſages amount to no more than this, viz. That as baptiſm exhibits the bleſſing of the church's union to Chriſt and communion with him *indefinitely*; ſo it lays the baptized under obligations of *conformity* to him as the ſurety; and hence his *incarnation*, his *obedience*, his *ſufferings* — when he was devoted to the curſe as the ſacred victim, and (dreadful *baptiſm!* Luke xii. 50. Mark x. 38.) when the cup of divine juſtice was *poured out* § on him without mixture —— his *crucifixion*,

† p. 71.

§ The almoſt conſtant ſcriptural mode of expreſſing God's infliction of puniſhment when the metaphor is taken from water. See Pſa. lxix. 24. lxxix. 6. Jer. vi. 11. x. 25. xiv. 16. Ezek. vii. 8. xiv. 19 xx. 8, 13, 21. xxi. 31. xxx. 15. Hoſ. v. 10. Zeph. iii. 8. 2 Chron. xii. 7. xxxiv. 21, 25. Jer. vii. 20. xlii. 18. xliv. 6. Ez. xxii. 22, 31. xxxi. 18. Rev. xiv. 10. and xvi. throughout, &c. &c.

the apostle does urge the *special* duty of the mortification of sin, from the consideration of the *general nature* of baptism as *binding* the subject to *universal* duty, and consequently *that* very important one; and supposing that the apostle PRINCIPALLY alludes to this *general obligation* of duty resulting from the *nature* of the ordinance; does it not follow that the motive would be yet *stronger* if the mode was immersion?

I ANSWER, with Mr. B. that "we have no more authority to *invent* a signification for any rite of holy worship, than we have to *appoint* the rite itself‖." And if the texts in question do not *require* this additional allusion, it must be either *invented* to serve an hypothesis, or it must be sought in some *other* part of holy writ. There is no alternative, and therefore let our opponents take which they please, their fond conclusion is not *proved* from these premises. That the sacred passages referred to, do not *require* an allusion to the *mode* of baptizing, has been shewn, and whether or not immersion appears to be the most proper mode from *other* considerations, is not to the present argument, therefore to *suppose* an additional force and propriety in them on that account, is no better than begging the question.

§ 42. LET us hear Mr. B. "Now, if such [to represent the death, burial and resurrection of Christ,] be the *chief design* of the ordinance; if *these passages* of holy writ [Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12.] be pertinently applied; and if there be any

‖ p. 70.

crucifixion, when his body was bathed in its own blood, the circumstance which above all others St. Paul preached and gloried in — his dying for sin — his burial for three days and three nights — his victorious resurrection and triumphant ascension to heaven, —— are ALL illustrious FACTS, by which the christian, in virtue of the said union, is bound to all suitable conformity; —— if this, I say, be the apostle's meaning, as before shewn; it is plain Mr. B's conclusion is ill founded. For, maturely reflect, reader, do not christians *suffer* with Christ? are they not *crucified* with Christ? do not they *live*, and *sit* and *reign* with him in heavenly places? and are not these privileges in virtue of *union?* does not baptism represent that union *in general?* If so, why *confined* to these *three particulars* to the exclusion of others? "Know ye not, as if the apostle had said, that so many of us as were baptized *into Jesus Christ*, were baptized into him *at large*, (see Gal. iii. 27.) and *of course* into his death, that as he died *for* sin, so should we die *to* sin; as he buried our sin with his mortality, we should concur with his design by unremitted efforts to keep under subjection the body of sin; and as he rose to triumph over sin, we should not continue its deluded captives, but act as becomes a *royal priesthood*, *an holy nation*, *a peculiar people*‖." Was not *Christ crucified* the *most important*

‖ 1 Pet. ii. 9.

tant theme of Paul's apoſtolic teaching? (1 Cor. ii. 2.) And, God forbid, ſays he, that I ſhould glory ſave in the *croſs* of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. I am *crucified with* Chriſt; nevertheleſs I live.—Now this union being *general*, when any one branch of it is ſelected, it is according to the moral purpoſe in view. For it is evident, from the conſideration of the *general and univerſal nature* of union and communion between the church and the divine Sponſor, repreſented in baptiſm, that had the circumſtance of *crucifixion* anſwered the apoſtle's *moral deſign* better, he might have properly ſaid, "being *crucified* with him in baptiſm."

Now who ſees not, that the reſtrictive notion of baptiſm *principally* repreſenting the death, burial and reſurrection of Chriſt, is inadmiſſible, being repugnant to an equitable axiom of interpretation, (§ 9. ax. 3.) That no meaning of a text, which is contrary to another paſſage *more evident than itſelf*, can be the true one. Nothing can be plainer than this, that the apoſtle Paul, repeatedly, conſiders baptiſm as repreſentative of union and communion with Chriſt and his people *indefinitely*; (1 Cor. xii. 13. Gal. iii. 27. &c.) but this Mr. B's limiting hypotheſis virtually denies. For it is the ſame as to ſay, *that a part is greater than the whole:* that a few particulars, (however important) are *more principal* than the whole aggregate of the Redeemer's vicarious ſubſtitution.

Upon the whole, then, it appears, that to confine

confine the ſignification of baptiſm to this part of the ſurety's meritorious work, is contrary to the ſcriptural idea of baptiſm repreſenting union to Chriſt at large in *all thoſe reſpects* in which he is the ſinner's ſubſtitute. Nor is it eaſy to ſay, how *any mode* of miniſtration whatever is adapted to expreſs this more than another. From whence I infer, that neither the death, burial, reſurrection of Chriſt, nor any other *corporal ſtate* thro' which he paſſed, were to be *at all* repreſented by the ordinance. For the church has union and communion with him in *all the ſtates* of his ſuretyſhip, which were ſo various as not to be *capable* of an external repreſentation in one *ſingle act* as baptiſm is. Which leads to another concluſion, that may ſerve as a ſufficient reply to Mr. B's remaining argument, which implies, that "if there be any *correſpondency* between the ſign and the things ſignified, *immerſion muſt* be the mode of adminiſtration," and that is,

2. FROM the cleareſt teſtimonies of ſcripture, and from Mr. B's own maxim, it follows, That *if any facts at all*, of an *external* denomination, are repreſented in the mode of adminiſtration, we are referred, above all others, to the VISIBLE DESCENT of the Holy Spirit. Now this, as it is expreſsly called, without controverſy, a BAPTISM, is a more certain clue to find out and aſcertain the mode, moſtly uſed, than any other. I ſay *moſtly uſed*; for I own it does not appear to me likely that one uniform

mode prevailed even in the apoſtolic age. When, therefore, I object to the baptiſt ſenſe of Rom. vi. 4. &c. what I would be underſtood to mean is — theſe paſſages do not amount to a *proof*, either that our Lord's death, burial and reſurrection are the *principal facts*, ſignified by baptiſm, or, that the ordinance was *deſigned* viſibly to repreſent thoſe facts — that, ſo far from countenancing the *eſſentiallity* of dipping, they are *no evidence at all* of any alluſion to ſuch a mode. For further confirmation of which poſition, I refer the reader to that part of our ſubject which treats profeſſedly of the *mode*.

But why ſhould Mr. B. exert himſelf ſo much in an attempt to eſtabliſh, from *two* controverted paſſages, that the death, burial and reſurrection of Chriſt are the principal facts alluded to and repreſented, while there are *many more* texts, and thoſe *uncontroverted*, which repreſent the *deſcent and influences* of the Holy Ghoſt to be the things ſignified? Nay, I ſcruple not to aſſert it, there is *no object whatever* in all the New Teſtament, *ſo frequently* and *ſo explicitly* ſignified by baptiſm, as theſe divine influences, ſee Mat. iii. 11. Mark i. 8—10. Luke iii. 16, 21, 22. John i. 33. Acts i. 5. ii. 38, 39. viii. 12 — 17. v. 47. xi. 15, 16. &c. &c. Yet theſe things he *prudently* overlooks. The reaſon is at hand; *plunging* is practiſed by himſelf and his conſtituents, and there is a greater reſemblance between that practice and a burial, than between the

ſaid

ſaid plunging and the active communication and application of divine influences to the ſoul.

BESIDES, Mr. B.'s maxim may be thus retorted; if in baptiſm there is an *expreſſive emblem* of the deſcending influences of the Spirit, *pouring muſt* be the mode of adminiſtration, for *that* is the ſcriptural term moſt commonly and properly uſed for the communication of divine influences.

To conclude, when we impartially conſider theſe things, and withal, that the Goſpel diſpenſation is in the ſtricteſt ſenſe THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT ‖, it appears *moſt probable*, that the *various influences* of that divine Agent are *principally* repreſented in baptiſm. I own there appears to me great beauty in this ſcriptural view of the ordinance, eſpecially when conſidered in connection with the other ſtanding inſtitution of the goſpel. The *initiatory* rite, which is not to be reiterated, repreſents the *promiſed influences* of the ſpirit of grace; and by *exhibiting* theſe bleſſings as about to be imparted repeatedly and ſucceſſively, *obliges* the ſubject to unremitted and earneſt applications for them. While the *confirming* ordinance, which is to be repeated, repreſents the *death of the Lord* §, and by *exhibiting* this important tranſaction as a paſt event, *obliges* the ſubject to celebrate it euchariſtically, or in thankful remembrance of the great ſacrifice. The *former* teaches what the ſubject may *expect*, the *latter* to what he is *beholden*.

‖ 2 Cor. iii. 8, &c. § 1 Cor. xi. 26.

CHAP. III.

Of the proper Subjects of baptism; particularly, whether it is the WILL OF CHRIST that the infants of believing parents should be baptized?

§ 1. *Of the proper point in debate.* § 2. *How we may know what is the will of Christ in this matter.* § 3. *Pretended scriptural evidence against Pædobaptism, and the supposed silence of the New Testament about it.* § 4. *All these Antipædobaptist objections confronted with two propositions.* § 5. (I.) *Baptism is* APPLICABLE *to infants; as appears* (1) *From the nature and design of the ordinance.* § 6 — 9. (2) *From the scriptural account of necessary qualifications.* § 10. (3.) *From the concessions and principles of our opponents.* § 11. (II.) *It is the* WILL OF CHRIST *our children should be baptized, as appears,* § 12 — 17. (1.) *From the dictates of the law of nature, which are his will, when not contravened by positive authority, to* BENEFIT *our children.* § 18 —— 28. (2.) *From God's constant approbation of this principle, in all preceding dispensations.* § 29 — 35. (3.) *From the language of prophecy respecting children in gospel times.* § 36 —— 54. (4.) *From New Testament passages, which corroborate the preceding arguments.* § 55. *Corrolaries.*

§ 1.

§ 1. HAVING, in the former chapters, inveſtigated the nature of poſitive inſtitutions in general, together with the nature and deſign of baptiſm in particular; we proceed next to conſider, who are the proper ſubjects of that ordinance? And here it would be impertinent to enlarge on the evidence we have in ſcripture, that Jews and Heathens upon renouncing their *falſe* and embracing the *true* religion were baptized; for about this we have no diſpute. We do not inquire, whether it be right or not to baptize qualified *adults* who had not been baptized *before*; nor, whether a profeſſion of faith and repentance and a conſiſtent moral character be neceſſary for *ſuch*; but whether *any infants* are to be baptized? or, to bring the queſtion to a ſtill narrower compaſs, "Whether it is the WILL OF CHRIST that *believing* "*parents*, ſhould endeavour to have their children "*baptized*; and, virtually, being the other's "correlate, whether it is the WILL OF CHRIST "that *his miniſters* ſhould comply with their "requeſt in baptizing them?" The Antipœdobaptiſts adopt the *negative*; it is my buſineſs to make good the *affirmative*. Nor am I apprehenſive that our opponents themſelves will object to this ſtatement of the controverſy, but will allow, that if what is propoſed be *fairly demonſtrated*, our cauſe as Pœdobaptiſts is good, and our practice commendable.

§ 2. THIS being the matter in debate, our

next inquiry muſt be reſpecting the *allowable medium* of determining the queſtion. I doubt not but it will be allowed, to ſave proving what is ſo evident, that whatever ſhall appear to be the will of GOD, is equally the will of CHRIST, and *vice verſa*. When I ſpeak of Chriſt's WILL, I mean that will, *upon the whole*, as diſcoverable by us. This *will* being to us the *Supreme Law*, it is evident that wherever it appears, upon the whole, to preponderate, we are under proportionable obligation of concurring with that preponderation. —— Again, no one, who deſerves to be reaſoned with, will deny, that it is *perfectly indifferent* by *what means* this is aſcertained, provided *it be* but aſcertained; for if all *poſſible mediums* of proof be not allowed, then Chriſt's will, *upon the whole*, or all things conſidered, is not the deciding ſtandard, which is abſurd. Beſide, this rule is conſiſtent with our opponents' own principles; for, when they appeal on every turn to baptiſm as a poſitive inſtitution, they can mean nothing elſe than that it is Chriſt's will, *all things conſidered*, we ſhall *not* baptize our infant children.

THE *poſitive evidence* of ſcripture, in reference to baptiſm, or any other doctrine, privilege, or duty, holds the ſame rank in theology, as *experimented evidence* does in reference to any hypotheſis in philoſophy. As, in the latter caſe, there is no diſputing in favour of a ſyſtem *againſt facts*, phenomena and experiments; ſo, in the former caſe, no reaſoning can be valid in *oppoſition*

sition to *positive evidence*, or express discernible authority. This authority must be *discernible*, else it is no authority at all, for then *nothing* would remain to influence our determination. Nor can it be *positive*, but in proportion as it is express and unequivocal. For, in the present case, *positive authority* is that, the reason of which we do not, and cannot *otherwise* find out. Therefore, that positive evidence, for or against, which, if ascertained, must needs preclude all further investigation, should *first* be attended to. And if on examination no such evidence appear, the inquiry must be transferred to another *medium*, the nearest, in the scale of importance, to which it is applicable. Let any one propose a more just and satisfactory mode of investigating the subject, *(et erit mihi magnus Apollo)* I shall venerate his abilities, and will sincerely thank him for the discovery.

§ 3. THE first inquiry to be made being concerning the *positive evidence* of scripture, I should produce all those passages out of the New Testament which relate to the subject, were not this done already; but as it is done, the reader is referred to the beginning of the last chapter, to prevent needless repetition. Now since it would be endless, as well as unnecessary, for me to examine every sacred text produced against us, or which may be so produced, — and since that would be imposing on myself to prove a negative, — it only remains that I should bring to the test those which our opponents lay the

greateſt ſtreſs upon; and this ſtep is the more reaſonable, inaſmuch as it is to be preſumed their own intereſt in the debate would prompt them to produce the ſtrongeſt. And here I muſt beg of my reader he will give me credit when I ſay, that I ſhall endeavour all along to place the Antipœdobaptiſt objections in what appear to me the ſtrongeſt light, and dwell chiefly on thoſe points which are of the moſt radical importance in the controverſy.

WHEN we conſider the dictates of nature in parental feelings; the verdict of reaſon in favour of privileges; the relation children bore to the inſtitutions of ALL preceding diſpenſations; and eſpecially the language of prophecy in reference to the children of the goſpel church; — it may reaſonably be preſumed, from their inflexible oppoſition, our opponents have ſomething very expreſs to urge out of the *New Teſtament* to counteract ſo ſtrong a *probability* in our favour. And, ſurely, *expreſs* they muſt be, to reſiſt the united forces of ſuch conſiderations. And yet, ſtrange to think! I do not find that any of the Antipœdobaptiſts pretend to adduce ONE SINGLE TEXT as an expreſs and poſitive teſtimony for this purpoſe. Therefore, the mercenary forces they place in front muſt be ſuch as theſe. "There is no *expreſs precept*, or *prece-*
"*dent*, in the New Teſtament for pœdobaptiſm.
"—That ſuch paſſages are our *only* rule of doctrine
"and worſhip. — That the ſcripture *forbids* what
"it does *not mention*.—That in religious matters
"it

" it is not only sinful to go *contra statutum*, but " to go *supra statutum.*" — To these they add, " that to imagine the first positive rite of religious " worship in the christian church, is left in so vague " a state as Pœdobaptism supposes, is not only " contrary to the *analogy* of divine proceedings " in similar cases, but renders it morally im- " possible for the *bulk* of christians to discern " the *real* grounds on which the ordinance is " administered. — We have both express *com-* " *mands* and express *examples* for baptizing such " as *profess faith* in Jesus Christ; but for *none* " *else*. — That the *qualifications* required of those " for whom our Lord intended the ordinance, " do *not agree* to an infantile state. — That *faith* " and *repentance* are pre-required in baptism. — " Hence Philip said, *If thou believest with all* " *thy heart, thou mayest*, Acts viii. 37. The com- " mand of Peter was, *Repent and be baptized*, " Acts ii. 38. — That the sacraments are not " *converting* but *confirming* ordinances.—The fol- " lowing scriptures are also urged. Mark xvi. 16. " *He that believeth and is baptized.* Acts ii. 41. " *Then they that gladly received his word were* " *baptized.* 1 Pet. iii. 21. *The like figure whereunto,* " *even baptism, doth also now save us (not the put-* " *ting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of* " *a good conscience towards God) by the resurrec-* " *tion of Jesus Christ.* Again, That the scrip- " tures *confine* its administration to such as *pro-* " *fess faith* in the Son of God. — That our " practice restrains it almost *intirely* to such as lie

" under a natural incapacity of profeſſing repen-
" tance and faith. — That poſitive laws imply
" their negative; — that our Lord having given
" a commiſſion to baptize thoſe that are *taught*,
" without ſaying any thing elſewhere, by way
" of precept or of example, concerning ſuch as
" are *not* inſtructed being included in that com-
" miſſion; there was no neceſſity for him to
" *prohibit* the baptizing of thoſe who are *not*
" taught: much leſs the baptizing of infants,
" that *cannot* be taught, in order to render the
" baptiſm of them unlawful. — That ſince office,
" or duty, means an action conformable to
" *law*, it is plain that duty cannot be conceived
" without a law; that he does not perform
" a duty, when the *law*, or the *reaſon* of the
" law ceaſes †." —— Theſe, I believe, are Mr.
B.'s *moſt capital* objections, which are *excerpta* taken out of his eighth chapter, entitled, *No expreſs precept, or precedent, in the New Teſtament, for Pædobaptiſm.* But numerous as they are, their whole collective force from van to rear, conſiſts in theſe two things,

1. THAT ſuch are the *qualifications* for baptiſm, required in ſcripture, that children are *incapable* of it.

2. THAT, ſuppoſing they were qualified, ſince infants are not *expreſsly* and uncontrovertibly mentioned in connection with baptiſm, it is *not* the

† Pædob. Exam. p. 168, 174, 176, 179, 181, 183, 184, 185, 187, 188, 190.

the will of Christ they ſhould be baptized; becauſe in a poſitive inſtitution, nothing ſhort of an *expreſs precept* or *plain example* can indicate his will.

§ 4. On the contrary; to confront, to break, and to rout this boaſted ſophiſtical phalanx, I ſhall ſhew,

I. That the ordinance of baptiſm *is applicable* to infants, not leſs than to adults: or, in other words, that infants are poſſeſſed, according to ſcripture, of all *neceſſary qualifications* for baptiſm, and therefore *are capable* of it.

II. That there is ſufficient *poſitive evidence* it is the will of Christ baptized believing parents ſhould endeavour to get their children baptized. Let us begin with the former.

§ 5. (I.) That the ordinance of baptiſm is applicable to infants, as well as adults, appears hence,

(1.) That there is nothing in the *nature* and *deſign* of it, but is equally applicable to an infant as to its parent. For,

1. What is its *nature?* It is a *ſeal.* This, I flatter myſelf, has been demonſtrated in the foregoing chapter; and am bold to ſay, is capable of manifold demonſtration. But *what* does it ſeal? Not that the ſubject, *rightly baptized*, as ſome have affirmed, is aſſured thereby that he is juſtified and ſaved: which muſt imply, if any thing, that he who is *notſo aſſured* was *not rightly* baptized; than which nothing need be

be more abſurd. For, then, numbers baptized by the apoſtles themſelves were not *rightly* baptized. And yet, being a ſeal, it muſt aſſure the rightly baptized ſubject of ſomething. But what is this ſomething? Is it that the ſubject is *ſincere*, that he HAS *a good conſcience*, is *actually poſſeſſed* of certain perſonal endowments, or *certainly entitled* to new covenant bleſſings? This is impoſſible, on any other hypotheſis than the Popiſh figment of ſacraments being effectual to the ſubject, *ex opere operato*. What it *aſſures*, therefore, is not any thing *ſubjectively* to the baptized, whereby he is diſtinguiſhed from others; but as the only alternative, the *ſealing* muſt imply an *objective certainty* afforded him by the Inſtitutor. Now,

2. WHAT is the *deſign* of this objective ſealing? and what are the *truths* thus certified? (I ſay *truths*, for nothing which is not *true* does the God of truth certify.) The anſwer is plain — *That he will be* A GOD *to all the ſealed.* Or, more fully, this is the record, "That God gives i. e. *exhibits* to ſuch eternal life, thro' the mediation of his Son, and the influences of his ſpirit." But when I ſay, that God aſſures the baptized in and by the *fact* of the ordinance, he will be *a God* to him, I do not intend the erroneous, but too common notion, that a declaration or promiſe of his being A GOD to any, in the œconomical revelation of mercy, implies a *certain connection* between the *promiſee* and his future (much leſs his preſent) *poſſeſſion* of the Chief

Chief Good. For such declarations and promises cannot, I think, be conceived of, when addressed to man, under any other notion than that of a *proposal* from a first mover of covenant terms; for the *free nature* of man requires that he should be addressed in this way. But how man *answers* the divine requisitions, or how he *comes by* a nature and disposition which, as an echo, makes a suitable reply to such a proposal, belongs intirely to *another dispensation*, namely, that of SOVEREIGN EFFICACIOUS GRACE; the Holy Spirit therein executing the decree of election. It is evident, therefore, that the Lord may be properly said to be *the God* (or the *chief good)* of a person or people, in divine ordinances, independent of any adstipulation from the creature. For he was, in this sense, *the God* of the infant Jews, and uncircumcised in heart, no less than Abraham himself. But,

3. WHO sees not that if it be a *truth* he may be *a God* to any, infants or adults, independent on their gracious disposition, the same truth may be consistently *sealed* and certified to them. This I insist *was* done to all, adults or infants, rightly circumcised; and this *is* done to all, adults or infants, rightly baptized. However some have made an improper use of the topick of circumcision in the baptismal controversy, one would think there is *one thing* at least that may be inferred from it —that the seal of God's covenant to man, be that seal and that covenant what they may, is APPLICABLE to an infant as well as to its parent. If, indeed, God's requisitions *could not* be

be anſwered in *any other way*, than by the *believing conſent* of the ſinner, there would be ſome force in the objection of infants' incapacity and incapability of being the ſubjects of God's covenant ſeal. But this is not the caſe. For tho' infants are ſinners, and have no believing conſent; yet ſome infants, our opponents being judges, anſwer God's requiſitions, or, in other words, are juſtified. The truth is, the infant of a day, and the convert of three-ſcore years, are accepted on the *ſame account*, tho' attended with different circumſtances. Union with the Saviour, formed by a ſovereign act of grace, anſwers all demands. All other conſiderations are merely circumſtantial. If, then, infants are capable of anſwering the *grand condition* of acceptance, nay *equally* ſo with adults, it is evident that they are capable of being under obligations, and ſtill *more capable* of baptiſm, the ſeal of the objective certainty of exhibited bleſſings.

§ 6. (2.) THAT infants are *capable ſubjects* appears, alſo, from the ſcriptural account of *neceſſary qualifications* for baptiſm. Infants are capable not only of what is *equivalent* to faith, repentance, the anſwer of a good conſcience, a profeſſion of Chriſt, &c. and a *ſubjective ſuitableneſs* for the inſtitution; but alſo of *that very thing*, from which theſe *qualities* derive all their value.

1. INFANTS are capable of what is *equivalent* to faith, &c. in the moſt important concerns, ſuch as acceptance with God, juſtification to life,

life, &c. and where these very things are pronounced *as necessary* as in the case of baptism. For instance, He that *believeth* shall be *saved*; but he that *believeth not* shall be *damned*. Without *faith* it is impossible to *please God*. Except ye *repent*, ye shall all likewise *perish*. He that *believeth not* God, hath made him a *liar*. With the heart man *believeth* unto *righteousness*, and with the mouth *confession* is made unto *salvation*. Now, what can be more evident than that these, and innumerable similar passages, are *not intended* to exclude from the benefits of redemption, all *infants*, but UNBELIEVERS, IMPENITENT sinners, DISPLEASERS of God, and DISOWNERS of Christ. This conclusion does not, indeed, appear from the passages themselves, for they are as express and peremptory as can be, in *restricting* the qualifications for SALVATION, to FAITH, REPENTANCE, &c. yet, when we consider infants' capacity for the *former*, as moral and immortal beings, and their incapacity for the *latter*, (however peremptorily the conditions and qualifications are specified;) and when we consider the favourable regard shewn them, in every dispensation, by the Great Father of all; we are fairly led to conclude, that such passages of holy writ do not affect infants, as *non*-believers, *non*-penitents, *non*-pleasers, or *non*-professors. For the positive virtues and graces which divines call conditions of salvation, *sine qua non*, are opposed, not to the *mere absence* of those qualities in their activity and exercise, but to their *active opposites*, unbelief,

unbelief, impenitence, &c. which can take place only in adults.

FROM the premiſes, then, it is clear, that if infants are *capable* of thoſe things which are *equivalent* to faith and repentance, as qualifications for the *moſt important* privilege of ſalvation, they are alſo capable of what are equivalent to them as qualifications for the *leſs important* privilege of baptiſm. For, if the one be denied, ſo *may* the other; and if the one be granted, ſo *ought* the other. Infants are capable of a divinely conſtituted *union* with the infinitely worthy Saviour, not leſs than adults; and are they incapable of the *ſymbol* of that union? Infants are capable of the *influences* of the holy Spirit, not leſs than adults; and are they incapable of the *ſymbol* of thoſe influences? He that CAN believe it, let him believe it.

§ 7. 2. INFANTS are capable of a *ſubjective ſuitableneſs* for the inſtitution. The nature and deſign of baptiſm require, as is plain to common ſenſe, that *oſtenſible foes*, ſuch as unbelievers, impenitents, and the like, ought not to be treated as *apparent friends*; that thoſe who *evidently* love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil, ſhould not be ranked with the *viſible* children of light; but does it follow that infants muſt be claſſed with the former, and not with the latter? There is a *ſuitableneſs* in excluding *open enemies* from an external token of a *ſuppoſed fitneſs* to be ſubjects of the goſpel kingdom. But does it follow that infants ought to

to be alſo excluded? Again, there is a *ſuitableneſs* in this, that none but believers, penitents and profeſſors ſhould be baptized, *among adults*, becauſe if they are not ſuch, they muſt be poſitively the reverſe; for in *them* there is no alternative; there is no medium between faith and unbelief, between repentance and impenitence. Of *them*, he that is not *for* Chriſt, is *againſt* him. But can the ſame be ſaid of infants? Becauſe they are not *intelligent* and *voluntary* ſubjects, muſt they be treated as foreigners? nay, as rebels? Is there no *medium* between loyal active obedience, and rebellion? And becauſe the infants of any community do not make an active part of the ſtate, does it follow that there is no *ſuitableneſs* in their being ſubjects at all? But if there be a ſuitableneſs in infants being admitted proper ſubjects of a civil kingdom, *much more* is there a ſuitableneſs in their being admitted ſubjects of the goſpel kingdom; the requiſitions of the *latter* having a reſpect to *grace*, which is applicable to both alike, but thoſe of the *former* having a reſpect to *reaſon*, of which infants are incapable.

MOREOVER: it is apparent, that faith and repentance are no diſtinguiſhing characteriſticks of a chriſtian *as ſuch*, but of a chriſtian *as adult*; theſe qualifications are not *eſſential* to chriſtianity, (if we intend thereby ſalvation thro' Chriſt) for this may exiſt without them. Now if the initiating ordinance of chriſtianity has relation to the *eſſence*, *nature* and *deſign* of chriſtianity, and not

not merely to a *particular mode* of it, it follows that the ordinance is applicable to infants. To ſay, that this initial rite refers not to chriſtianity itſelf, but only to a certain mode or circumſtance of it, is flatly to contradict its nature and deſign. For baptiſm exhibits *the whole* of chriſtianity, and not merely *a part*; its *eſſence* and not a mere *circumſtance*; as appears from the preceding chapter. It *exhibits* regeneration, ſanctification, myſtical union, ſalvation, &c. which are common to infants and adults. Nor does it appear, I believe, that *any thing* is therein exhibited, which is not *equally applicable* to both. Nay, were we, for argument' ſake, to allow Mr. B. 's account of what it repreſents, viz. The death, burial, and reſurrection of Chriſt, and communion with him therein, it ſtill follows, that infants are not leſs *capable* of theſe bleſſings than believers, penitents and profeſſors. They are alſo *capable* of being put under *obligation*, except we adopt one of the moſt abſurd poſitions — That we ought not to be grateful, when grown up to manhood, for a benefit received in infancy. Thus we ſee, that *ſuitableneſs* to the nature and deſign of baptiſm, belongs to the infant no leſs than his parent.

§ 8. 3. AGAIN: they are capable of *that very thing* from which faith, repentance and profeſſion derive all their value. That there is in ſcripture a connection formed between *believing* and *baptiſm* in *adults*, is clear from particular paſſages, as well as the nature and deſign of the

the ordinance; but it is not less clear that this connection depends on these qualities, not as they are *in themselves*, but only as they are *indicative* of something more essential †. These qualities are no further valuable than they are *expressive* of the person's moral and relative *state*. For, on our opponents' own principles, a preponderation of evidence *against* the latter, would abolish the pretensions of the former. They will allow, that the most plausible *profession* of knowledge or faith, is *of itself* no sufficient ground for baptizing adults; for if such a defect in a candidate's moral character, as demonstrates to the minister at the time of baptization, the insincerity of his profession, and the badness of his state, be proved against him, it would certainly disqualify him for the ordinance. It is clear from the nature of the case, that the beforementioned qualities, rather than any *other* christian virtues, are connected with baptism, because they are the most striking and decisive *indications* of a real change of state, or at least suitableness of state and disposition to commence a subject of the gospel kingdom. Does an infidel become a *believer?* Does a criminal become a *penitent?* Is the ignorant become *knowing?* Then they give a minister the best evidence the case can afford, that they are proper subjects; that is, in a state suited to the nature and design of the institution. Could we suppose a person possessed of the clearest understanding of

† See Mr. Booth's Apology for the Baptists. p. 2.

of chriſtian doctrines; making the moſt devout and abundant profeſſions of ſincerity, of the ſoundneſs of his faith and the genuineneſs of his repentance; the integrity and circumſpection of his conduct for a length of time paſt; — but, while the candidate is ſtanding ready for the ordinance, and the miniſter is going to execute the command of Chriſt, inconteſtible evidence is produced of his being that very day guilty of a notorious deliberate crime, which he had ſtudiouſly concealed; what can the miniſter do? Muſt he forbid water? On what ground? His knowledge, profeſſion of faith, repentance, &c. are now ſuperſeded on a *moral* account. On the ſuppoſition, his baptiſm was to have taken place *becauſe* of thoſe qualifications, but now he is excluded *becauſe he wants* THAT VERY THING of which children are *capable*, viz. a ſtate of grace and acceptance. But, if it be ſaid, that the reaſon of his rejection was becauſe his profeſſion was not *ſincere*, it amounts to the ſame thing; for what is the difference between a ſtate of *ſincerity* and a ſtate of *grace?*

§ 9. SHOULD it be ſtill urged, that "what is deemed by the Antipœdobaptiſts as the grand qualification, is a *credible profeſſion*; not grace apart, nor profeſſion apart, but the *union* of both; of which infants are incapable:" I anſwer,

THIS diſtinction, however ſpecious, is a mere evaſion. For if there be any force in it, it militates alike againſt their *ſalvability*. For we are

are *saved* by grace, *thro' faith*. We are *saved* by *hope*. With the mouth *confession* is made to *salvation*. If any man *love not* the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha. *Repent* — that your sins may be blotted out. Now if this *union* be requisite in *one* case, it must be so in the *other*, since it is required with *equal* explicitness in both. And salvation is connected, not with grace apart, nor profession apart, but with the *union* of grace and the expressions thereof in faith, hope, confession, love to Christ, and repentance. But whatever shews this latter instance to be fallacious is proportionably conclusive against the objection. Suffice it to observe, as before — that in *each* case, the scriptures require these expressions and signs of a gracious state, of those *only* who are capable of their active opposites, or the contrary vices. And they derive their value intirely from the *circumstances* in which they are placed †, and not from any supposed excellency resulting from their union as such.

Besides, that there is no such *union* as the objection supposes, no such indispensible connection between these qualities and baptism, as founded on divine *positive authority*, is apparent hence; that in the New Testament *different qualities* are required of *differont persons*, according to the circumstances in which these persons are found. If any are charged with some notorious sins, the exhortation is, *Repent* and be bap-

† See Pædobaptismus Vindicatus, p. 15, &c.

baptized; if any are in a ſtate of inquiry after ſalvation, the qualification is, *believing on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; if any heſitate in giving their aſſent to his meſſiahſhip, *believing with the whole heart* is required. In like manner the *confeſſion of ſins, receiving the word with joy, the anſwer of a good conſcience, &c.* are required in different circumſtances. But what renders this argument irrefragable is, that our Lord was a *ſuitable ſubject of the baptiſm of repentance*, tho' *incapable of repentance*. He poſſeſſed, indeed, what was *equivalent* to it, but not the *thing itſelf*. The ſame may be ſaid of *regeneration, &c.* The baptiſm of John required repentance and the confeſſion of their ſins of thoſe only who were in circumſtances *capable* of theſe things, but they were not *eſſential* qualifications; for what was eſſential to the nature and deſign of the inſtitution, Chriſt muſt have poſſeſſed, elſe there was no propriety and ſuitableneſs in his being the ſubject of it.*

As to what is called a *credible profeſſion*, it is plain the epithet *credible* is predicated of profeſſion to ſhew, on the one hand, the inſufficiency

* "Neque obſtare debet, quod non *omnia* quæ itidem per "baptiſmum ſignificari ſolent, in iſtam ætatem [ſcil. infantiam] "proprie congruant. Nam et *pœnitentia*, quam ſcimus baptiſmo de"ſignari, *majorem* certe in iis qui, cum vitam diu impuram "egiſſent, vitæ t tius mutandæ propoſitum teſtabantur, quam "in aliis, locum habebat; in CHRISTO vero, quem Johannes "baptizavit, NULLUM; qui, ut TERTULLIANUS loquitur, *nul*"*lius pœnitentiæ debitor vinctus eſt.*" POLI Synopſ. in Matth. xix. 14.

ciency of *mere* profeſſion, and on the other, that the *ſuppoſed poſſeſſion* of the thing profeſſed, gives to profeſſion *the whole* of its value. Thus in reſpect of promiſes and oaths, they are no further valuable, in a moral and religious ſenſe, than they are exact delineations of the reſpective principles from which they are ſuppoſed to proceed. A promiſor or a juror, known to be *falſe* in the matter promiſed or ſworn, is deteſted. The value of theſe things ariſes from their *credibility*, that is, from the *ſuppoſed connection* between the ſign and the thing thereby ſignified. So far, then, it is clear, that if there be any profeſſion *at all*, that profeſſion ought to be *credible*. But from the conſideration, that no profeſſion is available but what is credible, it does not follow, that *profeſſion* of this or any other kind is *neceſſary*. For the nature of the goſpel kingdom, and of this inſtitution, do not require, any more than the nature of civil government, that infants, becauſe not capable of *profeſſing* allegiance to their reſpective kings, ſhould be conſidered as *no ſubjects*; tho' the nature and deſign of the one and the other require, that where it is ſuitable there ſhould be a profeſſion at all, it ſhould be a *credible* one.

§ 10. (3.) It may be made to appear, from the principles and conceſſions of our opponents, that infants are not *naturally incapable* of baptiſm; but the incapacity they object to is deduced, from the ſuppoſed eſſentiality of faith and profeſſion, as qualifications for the ordinance. For thus Dr. S. writes in reply to Dr. Addington's

DINGTON's enumeration of benefits reſulting from infant baptiſm: "Now, Sir, IF theſe advantages, which no doubt are very great and important, were the natural and proper effects of the application of baptiſm to infants; or IF the ceremony were *appointed* by God to theſe ends; or IF the omiſſion of it did at all leſſen the obligations of parents to take care of the education of their children, or of children to make all ſuitable returns to their parents and to demean themſelves well in life, or of miniſters to inſtruct and exhort them both to their ſeveral duties: IF this were the caſe, *I acknowledge it would be both cruel and impious to deny them to children* ‖."

HERE it is plain, from the *avowed connection* ſubſiſting between the conſequence and the hypothetical antecedents, that nothing is neceſſary to render infants equally CAPABLE of baptiſm with adults, but a *divine appointment* of its application to them, or its *uſeful tendency* when applied. And, therefore, no *incapacity* in infants, Dr. S. being judge, can be fairly objected, but what ariſes from a begging of the queſtion in debate. For, if it ſhall appear, that it is the *will of Chriſt* believers ſhould get their infant offſpring baptized; or, if it ſhall appear, that there is a preponderation of *ſolid advantages* in its favour, the pretended incapability urged is totally annihilated.

§ 11. (II.) I AM now to ſhew, that it is the WILL OF CHRIST baptized believing parents ſhould endeavour to get their children baptized. When I expreſs myſelf thus, I would not be underſtood

‖ p. 291.

ſtood to mean, that thoſe parents who are *not baptized*, and do *not believe*, are under *no obligation* with reſpect to their own baptiſm and that of their children; but our controverſy with the Anti-pœdobaptiſts does not require a greater univerſality than is expreſſed in the propoſition. It muſt be left to the candid reader to determine, whether the preceding pages evince the *capability* of infants to anſwer the nature and deſign of the inſtitution. But our opponents contend, "That, ſuppoſing they were capable and qualified, ſince infants are not *expreſsly* and incontrovertibly mentioned in connection with baptiſm, "it is not the *will of Chriſt* they ſhould be baptized; becauſe, in a poſitive inſtitution, nothing ſhort of an *expreſs precept* or *plain example* can indicate his will." The fallacious impropriety of connecting the abſtract notion of a poſitive inſtitution with the ordinance of baptiſm in its complex form, and eſpecially in extending its *poſitiveneſs* to the moral *qualifications* of the ſubjects, has been ſhewn in the firſt chapter; to which the reader is referred. Now, againſt the remaining part of the objection I maintain, that *on ſuppoſition* infants are not expreſsly and incontrovertibly mentioned in connection with baptiſm, there is ſufficient *poſitive evidence* in favour of Pœdobaptiſm. For,

§ 12. (1) THE *law and light of nature* require, and conſequently the *will of Chriſt*, that parents ſhould introduce their children to all the *benefits* and privileges of which they are capable.

THAT infants are ſubjects capable of baptiſm (*capable*, I mean, in the propereſt ſenſe) has been demonſtrated. For, *baptiſm* being the SEAL of God, to be miniſterially applied to all the ſubjects of the viſible goſpel kingdom; and *circumciſion* being a SEAL of the righteouſneſs of faith; the latter therein eminently agreeing with the former; it follows, that if an infant be *capable* of the one, it is *equally* ſo of the other.—It remains therefore that we attend to the remaining parts of the complex propoſition. I ſay, then,

1. BAPTISM is a *benefit* and privilege when applied to capable ſubjects, poſſeſſing all the qualifications neceſſary to anſwer the ſcriptural deſign of the ordinance. That it is a *benefit* to ſuch is apparent, when we conſider what baptiſm when applied neceſſarily includes. It includes a relative change of ſtate; thereby the ſubject is tranſlated, miniſterially, from a ſtate of diſtance to a ſtate of nearneſs; is ſeparated from the world and joined to the univerſal church; is thereby legally entitled to all the other external privileges of the goſpel diſpenſation, of which the ſubject is capable, this being the right of *initiation* into them. Again, it includes, a dedication of the ſubject to Father, Son, and Spirit; is a *ſeal* of God's covenant to the ſubject, aſſuring him to his dying day, that therein are *exhibited* to him exceeding great and precious promiſes; and, of courſe, lays a foundation for the moſt rational and intereſting obligations of duty. And, indeed, the

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ſingle conſideration of baptiſm laying all ſuitable ſubjects to whom it is miniſterially applied under ſuch obligations, is alone deciſive in ſupport of the point under conſideration. And here we may aſk, If infants are capable and ſuitable ſubjects, as we have proved they are, and if the above important particulars belong to all theſe when baptized, *as ſuch*; what greater *benefit* can we conceive to appertain to a divine inſtitution? Could Paul himſelf regard his baptiſm in a more *beneficial* light? For, if it be ſaid, that an adult has an opportunity at his baptiſm to *teſtify* his faith and repentance, to *profeſs* his ſubjection and allegiance to Chriſt, it is plain this is only confounding what are in themſelves diſtinct, divine *benefits* and human *duties*. To call the diſcharge of duty a divine benefit, in ſtrictneſs of ſpeech, is to ſay that the *grounds* of moral obligation, and the *diſcharge* thereof, are one and the ſame thing, which is abſurd. The grounds, motives and encouragements of duty are divine benefits, together with the ability, inclination and the effective cauſe of compliance with duty; but, properly ſpeaking, *duties themſelves* are not ſo. And this muſt neceſſarily be the caſe while man is free in his actions and accountable for them.

§ 13. If the above reaſoning be juſt, and if I do not greatly miſunderſtand our oppoſers, *their* notion of baptiſm is *no benefit at all.* We conſider the baptiſmal ordinance as a *ſeal* of God's covenant to *fœderati*, and of conſequence the

right to it a *benefit*. To this Dr. S. replies, "If ſealing be, as you have ſeen, a matter of *duty* rather than of right, to uſe this kind of language is much the ſame as to ſay, that perſons have a right *to do their duty*†." But be it known, that this worthy author does not ſay, as indeed he could not with any colour of plauſibility, that infants are *incapable* of being *benefited* by free grants and covenants, for thus he ſubjoins: "A man may be included in a covenant or BENEFITED by it, who is *no way a party* to it, and whoſe ſignature therefore is not at all requiſite. CHILDREN, for inſtance, frequently derive *advantages* from covenants which, with all the authentic forms of them, exiſted long before they were born‖." The Reaſon, therefore, why infants, according to him, are not proper ſubjects of baptiſm, is not becauſe of any incapacity in them of being *benefited*, but becauſe they are incapable of *duty*. And ſo eſſential is the ſubject's *duty*, on theſe principles, to the ordinance of baptiſm, that ſeparate from this obſequious concurrence, the inſtitution itſelf is not a benefit or a privilege, but a mere non-entity. Conſequently, for any to diſregard baptiſm, is not to diſregard a *benefit* mercifully held forth to them, but the neglect of a *duty*, in the ſame ſenſe as prayer, or any other moral duty is neglected. On theſe principles, therefore, which repreſent baptiſm as *no benefit* in any ſenſe but that in which the *performance of any duty* is ſo, it

† Anſ. to Dr. ADDINGTON's Reaſons, p. 106. ‖ Ibid.

it is no wonder that our antagonists should pronounce the baptizing of infants an absurd practice, for it is the same as to put an infant on performing duty! But if it be so, it equally follows, that baptism is *no benefit*, properly speaking, to believers. And if no benefit, it can lay them under no obligations of gratitude, for gratitude necessarily supposes a benefit. What they must lay for a foundation of gratitude on these principles is their *own performance* of duty, and that properly being no divine benefit, their gratitude must terminate on *themselves*. But what are our opponents' *avowed grounds* of obligations of duty in this matter? Dr. S. replies: "There can be no doubt that we are to consider it [baptism] as a solemn test, whereby we VOLUNTARILY BIND OURSELVES to new obedience.——Nor can it be in regard of them [infants] a test of new obedience, they not VOLUNTARILY SUBMITTING TO IT*." Is this the language of a protestant orthodox divine? Is our NEW OBEDIENCE founded on our OWN SUBMISSION? Is our OBEDIENCE obligatory in proportion as we BIND OURSELVES to it? Be it so; there is one consequence inevitably follows, viz. That no person in the world is under any *obligation* to perform what he does not voluntarily submit to, or to regard any thing as a *duty* until he *binds himself* to the performance of it. A doctrine this, that will be always grateful to the human mind, in proportion as it

* *Ut supra*, p. 109.

is diſaffected to the requiſitions of its Creator! How much more rational and ſcriptural the ſuppoſition, That baptiſm, as a divine inſtitution, is a *benefit* conferred on all who are the capable and actual ſubjects of it; and, as ſuch, exhibiting bleſſings and obliging to anſwerable duties? To conclude this paragraph, I will ſubjoin the words of a Prelate on this ſubject, in whom the power of godlineſs, ſound learning, and judicious moderation, ſeemed to unite their ſplendors: "Either baptiſm is a *benefit* to "ſants, or it is not. If none, why then admi- "niſtered at all; but if it be [which was his "real ſentiment] then why ſhould the poor "innocents be prejudged of it for the parent's "cauſe, if he profeſs but ſo much of a chriſ- "tian as to offer his child to that ordi- "nance†." We now come to ſhew,

§ 14. 2. THAT as baptiſm is a *benefit* applicable to infants, the *dictates of nature* require our applying it to them; and, provided theſe dictates are the *will of Chriſt*, and if they are not contravened by poſitive authority, the concluſion is clear as the day, That it is the WILL OF CHRIST profeſſing parents ſhould ſolicit baptiſm for their children, and goſpel miniſters ſhould baptize them.

LET us not miſtake the ſtate of the queſtion, and the force of the argument. I do not ſay that BAPTISM is diſcoverable by the light of nature, but that the *revealed* account of it conſiders it as a BENE-

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† Archbiſhop LEIGHTON's Select Works, Let. No. 1.

FIT; and that the law and light of nature require we ſhould confer on our children all the benefits of which they are ſuitable ſubjects, and which lie within our power. This is of importance to be obſerved; for there is a very obvious difference between the *diſcovering* of a benefit and the *application* of it, when diſcovered, to one rather than another. This diſtinction Dr. S. overlooks, when he thus interrogates and replies: "Is *infant baptiſm* a duty the *light of* "*nature and reaſon* teaches? This ſurely will "not be pretended*." But this is artfully blending what are in themſelves perfectly diſtinct. We do not ſay that BAPTISM, viz. The chriſtian purification in the name of the Father, and ſo on, is taught by the light of nature and reaſon; but is, on the contrary, a *poſitive appointment*. And what then? Does it follow that the light of nature and reaſon is not concerned in the *application* of baptiſm to one ſubject in preference to another? The miniſterial commiſſion to *baptize* (as well as to *preach*) is a *diſcretionary truſt*; the goſpel revelation is the RULE and poſitive directory; but can any one, who properly conſiders the nature of divine laws, their ſeparate and reſpective influence, the nature of poſitive authority in particular, heſitate a moment about the neceſſity of the *light of nature and reaſon* to aſſiſt in the *application* of that rule? To ſuppoſe that, by inſiſting on the neceſſary aids of the dictates of nature in the *application* of the ſcripture rule in many caſes,

* Anſ. to Dr. A. p. 291.

we derogate from the *true perfection* of the ſacred volume, is a ſurmiſe demonſtrably weak and impertinent. Suffice it to obſerve with St. AUSTIN: "To reject the conduct of the *light of* "*nature* is not only fooliſh but alſo impious*." With TERTULLIAN: "Thoſe *notions* and "perſuaſions of the human mind that are *com-* "*mon*, are capable of making us wiſer, even "in *divine matters*, provided we employ them "in defence of truth, not for the ſupport "of error †." With HOOKER: "The will of "God, which we are to judge our actions by, "no ſound divine in the world ever denied to "be in part made manifeſt even by *light of na-* "*ture* and not by ſcripture alone ‡." With CHILLINGWORTH: "It is very meet and rea- "ſonable and neceſſary that men, as in ALL "their actions, ſo eſpecially in that which is of "greateſt importance, the choice of their way "to happineſs, ſhould be left unto — *right* "*reaſon*, grounded on *divine revelation* and *com-* "*mon notions*, written by God in the hearts of "all men; — deducing, according to the ne- "ver-failing rules of logic, conſequent deduc- "tions from them. And he that follows this "in all his opinions and actions, and does not "*only ſeem* to do ſo, FOLLOWS ALWAYS GOD‖."

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* AUGUSTINUS de Trin. cap. vi. *Luminis naturalis* ducatum repellere, non modo ſtultum eſt, ſed et impium.

† TERTULLIANUS de Reſur. carnis. cap. iii. Eſt quidem et de *communibus ſenſibus* ſapere in *Dei rebus*, ſed in teſtimonium veri, non in adjutorium falſi.

‡ HOOKER's Eccles. Polity, B. III. § 8.

‖ CHILLINGWORTH's Religion of Proteſtants, Pref. § 12.

The influence, therefore, here ascribed to the light of nature, is not the *discovery* of baptism as a *positive* appointment, (which would imply a contradiction) but the *application* of baptism to some persons rather than others, with the assistance of the scripture rule. If the scripture rule *clearly counteract* what *seemed* before a natural dictate, this latter, it is evident, should submit to the former; if not, and supposing revealed positive evidence out of the question, the natural dictate continues in full force, being, on the supposition, the *only* evidence remaining in the case. But if to this last mentioned evidence be *superadded* any given degree of scriptural authority, the force of obligation is *increased* in that proportion.

§ 15. When I speak of the *Law of nature*, in this connection, I would be understood to mean nearly with Grotius: "That [regular] "dictate of right reason which shews "that there is in any [human] act, from its "agreement or disagreement with "[our] rational [and social] nature a "moral turpitude, or a moral necessity; and, "of course, that such an act is either forbid-"den or enjoined by God the author "of nature*." And, with Calderwood, I would term any human act indifferent "which has no *moral* goodness or pravity; "that is, which is neither enjoined nor for-"bidden, by any law natural or divine.†"

* Grotius De Jure Belli ac Pacis. Lib. I. Cap. I. § x. 1.

† Calderwood Altare Damascenum. Cap. ix. De rebus adiaphoris et ceremoniis. p. 366.

All human acts, therefore, *morally* conſidered, in their general and univerſal nature, are either GOOD, BAD, or, *ſecundum ſpeciem*, INDIFFERENT; tho' no human act, in its particular and ſingular nature, *ſecundum individuum*, terminating in actual exiſtence and attended with all its circumſtances, can be morally *indifferent*. By the *light of nature* I underſtand with DODDRIDGE: "That part of the law of nature which man "by the exerciſe of his reaſon *has actually diſ-* "*covered* ‖," and not merely what he *may diſcover*, by that means.

HERE let it be obſerved, that as the reports of *ſenſe* may be taken for true, when there is no reaſon againſt them; becauſe when there is *no* reaſon *not* to believe, that alone is a reaſon for believing them: ſo, the reports of the *law of our nature* may be taken for true, when there is *no revelation againſt* them; for to do otherwiſe would be to deny our aſſent to what, on the ſuppoſition, is the *beſt evidence*. And where *certainty* is not to be had, probability muſt be ſubſtituted in the place of it: that is, it muſt be conſidered, which ſide of the queſtion is the *more probable*. With whatever contempt ſome may affect to treat this rule, they ſhould be reminded that the object of ſuch contempt is *truth itſelf*. Beſides, unleſs it be reaſonable to put out our *candle*, becauſe we have not the light of the *ſun*, it muſt be reaſonable to direct our ſteps by probability when we have nothing clearer

‖ DODDRIDGE's Lect. Definit. LXII.

clearer to walk by. The only alternative is to wander and fluctuate in *absolute* uncertainty †.

NOR can it be denied, "that every man," as PUFFENDORF obſerves, "of mature age, and a "ſound mind, poſſeſſes ſo much of this natu- "ral light, that uſing proper means and due "attention, he may very well diſcover at leaſt "the general precepts and principles of the law "of nature; and, at the ſame time, judge, "that theſe are perfectly ſuitable to his nature "and ſtate *. But if any thing be determined, by "rational inveſtigation, to be a part of the law of "nature, this muſt not, on that account, be pro- "nounced *oppoſite* to what the ſacred ſcriptures "deliver *more clearly* on the ſame ſubject; but "ſhould be diſtinguiſhed as it were by *abſtraction*§."

§ 16. HAVING premiſed theſe things reſpecting *natural dictates*, as being of divine origin, and of univerſal and perpetual obligation, when not contravened by the expreſs will of the ſupreme Lawgiver, who alone has a right to controul them; we proceed to inquire what are ſome of the moſt important and *univerſally acknowledged parts and principles thereof*, that relate to our preſent purpoſe.

THE following things ſeem to be of that deſcription: "That man is a ſocial creature: "and

† See WOLLASTON's Religion of Nature, § III. 14, 15, 16.

* Vid. PUFFENDORFIUM De Officio, Lib. I. Cap. I. § 4.

§ Id. Pref. § 4.

" and the ſubject of moral obligation. That " all injuſtice is wrong and evil, and *vice verſa*. " That to render all their due, is juſtice: and " to detain any thing that is another's, is injuſ- " tice. That infant children are to be regard- " ed as parts of their parents. That parents " have a juſt right of putting their children, " even in earlieſt infancy, under future obliga- " tions: or, in other words, that they *ought to* " *benefit* their children, when it is in their " power to do ſo. That parents ought to take " the *beſt care* of their children they can, en- " deavour to provide for them, and to be al- " ways ready to aſſiſt them. That in order to " the good of children, there muſt be ſome " authority over them lodged by nature in the " parents: that is, the nature of the caſe is " ſuch, as *neceſſarily requires* there ſhould be " in the parents an authority over their chil- " dren *in order to their good*. That parents " ought *to diſpoſe* of their children according to " the *beſt* of their judgment. That as the " child *grows up*, the caſe is ſtill the ſame in " *ſome degree* or other, till he arrives at the age " reckoned mature; and very often longer. " That parents, in conſulting the *good* of their " children, ought to adopt thoſe means, which, " according to the beſt of their ſkill, abilities, " and opportunities, they find moſt conducive " to *that end*. That children are laid under " *obligations* to their *parents* in proportion as " they are *benefited* by them; and to GOD ſu-

" premely

" premely, as the ultimate source and first cause " of all. That the *natural affection* which re- " gularly and mutually subsists in parents and " children, ought to be observed and followed, " when there is no reason to the contrary. For " when there is no reason why we should not " comply with it, its own very solicitation, and " the agreeableness we apprehend to be in com- " plying, are *preponderating* arguments. This " must be true, if *something* is more than *no-* " *thing*. Nay, if this στοργὴ be only a kind " of *attraction* in the mere matter of parents " and children; yet still this physical mo- " tion or *sympathy* ought not to be over-ruled " if there be not a *good* reason for it. On the " contrary, it ought to be taken as a *suggestion* " of nature, which should always be regarded, " when it is not superseded by something *su-* " *perior*; that is, by *reason*, &c. — Therefore " not to act *according to* it, is not to act ac- " cording to reason, and to *deny* that to be which " is ‖. Consequently, That when parents do " not act according to these *dictates*, without a " divine warrant to act otherwise, they lie a- " gainst the truth, and *deny* themselves and their " children to be *what they are*; and the *relation* " that subsists between them. That when any " do not *benefit* their *offspring*, and those in their " *house*, who are not of age to *reject* the pro- " posed favour, act an *unnatural* part."

§ 17. From what is said, the conclusion is inevitable

‖ See Wollaston's Relig. of Nat. § VIII. *passim.*

inevitable — That it is the WILL OF CHRIST, his disciples should devote their infant children to him in baptism. ——For,

THE dictates of nature, uncontrouled by revelation, are the *will of Christ*, and our rule of duty. (§ 15.) — The WILL OF CHRIST, expressed in these *dictates*, requires us to *benefit* our children as they are capable. (§ 16) — *Baptism*, as the initiatory *seal* of God's covenant, is a *benefit* of which infants are *capable*. (See chap. II. § 23—25. and ch. III. § 5—10.) — This evidence is not *eclipsed*, but *brightened*, by scripture authority, as we shall see in the sequel of this chapter.

LET the reader carefully notice, that we do not suppose, by insisting on this argument, the insufficiency of *direct scripture* evidence: for *this* has been frequently urged with advantage, to satisfy persons of the best dispositions and abilities. That is, reader, "some of the most eminent Pœdobaptists that ever filled the Professor's chair, or that ever yet adorned the Protestant pulpit." But since our opponents insist, that what has been so often urged, is not conclusive; and *modestly* affirm, it is only calculated to catch "the eye of a *superficial* observer;" they are desired once more impartially to weigh this reasoning, and then, if they are able, to refute it. Let them know, however, that hackneyed phrases without meaning — principles taken upon trust — and empty declamation — must not be palmed on us instead of solid arguments.

WERE it necessary, it would be easy to shew, that

that the principles above urged are no *novelty*; but are perfectly agreeable to experience, — and to the practical judgment of the most serious Pœdobaptists, both illiterate and learned. But waving this, proceed we next to another corroborating proof of the main proposition.

§ 18. (2) WHAT we contend for is, That it is the WILL OF CHRIST we should *baptize* our infant children. In proof of this we have shewn, first, that the *dictates of right reason* require us to *benefit* them, and consequently to *baptize* them; as baptism is always a benefit when administered to *capable* subjects. We come, secondly, to shew —— That God has constantly *approved* of *this principle*, in all *preceding* dispensations. In other words —— That the *principle* of the last argument is so far from being *weakened* by scripture evidence, that the Lord's *approbation* of IT, in his conduct towards the offspring of his professing people, in all the dispensations of true religion, is abundantly *illustrated* and *confirmed*.

Mr. B's misapplied but favourite maxim — "Positive laws imply their negative," has no force in the baptismal controversy, until he demonstrates, in opposition to what is advanced, that the dictates of right reason must be *smothered*, or else, that revelation *countermands* their influence. But to *demonstrate* the former, in matters about which, on the supposition, scripture is silent, is no easy task. And the difficulty will be *increased* in proportion as the sacred oracles corroborate

corroborate reaſon's verdict. Let us now appeal to theſe oracles.

§ 19. 1. WE appeal to that period of the church, and diſpenſation of grace, which extended from Adam to Noah. The inſpired narrative of this long ſpace of time is very ſhort: on which we make the following remarks. We then aſſert,

(1) WHATEVER exhibition of grace was made to antediluvian *parents*, was conſtantly made to their *offspring*; and conſequently whatever *ſeals* of grace were granted to the former, muſt equally appertain to the latter, if not voluntary *rejectors* of them. Therefore, all ſuch parents had a *revealed* warrant to regard their offspring as entitled to the *ſeals* of the covenant, in *like manner* as themſelves, according to their capacity. For,

(2) ALL allow that Gen. iii. 15. contains the promulgation of goſpel grace; nor are we authoriſed to queſtion the intereſt of *children* therein with their parents, without an expreſs contravention. For, it were *unnatural* for a parent to *confine* ſuch a *benefit* to his own perſon to the excluſion of his children, who are not only parts of his family but of *himſelf*. To which we may add, that the phraſe THY SEED, tho' principally referring to the Meſſiah, reſpected Eve's *natural ſeed* as ſharers in common with herſelf in the exhibition of mercy; and we ſuppoſe not leſs ſo than her HUSBAND. For this application of the phraſe *thy ſeed*, compare Gen. xvii. 7. and Gal. iii. 16. Again,

(3) IT

(3) It is generally agreed, that not only the inſtitution of *ſacrifices*, but alſo the *coats* of ſkin (Gen. iii. 21.) were *emblematic* of covenant bleſſings; and not only ſo, in common with mere types, but *ſeals* of the covenant, as earneſts and pledges of exhibited favour. "Who will deny," ſays Witsius, "that God's cloathing our firſt parents was a *ſymbolical* act? Do not Chriſt's own words (Rev. iii. 18.) very clearly allude to this*?" As for *ſacrifices*, they were ſlain at God's command after the promulgation of the covenant. For, if Abel *offered by* FAITH, (Heb. xi. 4.) it preſuppoſes the divine *inſtitution* of them. And this inſtitution, moſt probably, took place when God — taking occaſion from the inſufficiency of the aprons of fig-leaves, which the fallen pair ſewed together, to cover the ſhame of their nakedneſs — himſelf cloathed them with coats of ſkins. And moſt divines agree, that it is very probable, theſe were the ſkins of thoſe beaſts which were ſlain for *ſacrifices*. However, God gave teſtimony to theſe oblations of the antient patriarchs, that they were *acceptable* to him; but this cannot be ſuppoſed without admitting them to be *divinely inſtituted*. Beſides, a diſtinction of *clean* and *unclean* animals was obſerved before the deluge; which was not from *nature*, but the mere divine pleaſure; and may we not add, with a particular reſpect to *ſacrifices*? Now

(4) If

* Wits. Oecon. Fœd. Lib. iv. cap. vii. § 4—7.

(4) If, according to Witsius and others, these *skins of beasts*, and *sacrifices*, were appointed SEALS *of the righteousness of faith*; I would ask —— Was the *covenant* (using the term in the sense before explained, chap. ii. § 23, &c.) directed for the use of their SEED *in common* with the parents, and not the *seal* in like manner? For, if the seals be affixed to the covenant for *confirmation* of its contents, as well as, in another view, for signification; I would fain know, by what rule of construction we can infer, that the covenant *itself* belongs to the parents and their seed *in common*, while the *confirmation* of it belongs *exclusively* to the former? Is it not contrary to *custom* and *unreasonable* to conclude, that a charter of privileges, or a testamentary instrument, (which by the way expres the nature of the covenant) belongs to a man and his heirs ALIKE, but the confirming seal respects the former ONLY; while on the supposition, the sovereign, or the testator, has given *no ground* for such partiality? Besides,

(5) If the covenant itself be a *benefit* to the persons to whom it is directed, as it certainly is in *every* dispensation of it, it follows that the *confirmation* of it is so; for parents, therefore, to *deny* their offspring all the share in such common benefits they are capable of, without a divine warrant, is *unnatural*, and an act of *injustice*. We may therefore conclude —— that from Adam to Noah, the *covenant* and its *seals* appertained

appertained to *infants* in common with their parents.

§ 20. 2. We appeal next to that period of the church which extended from Noah to Abraham: On which we obſerve,

(1.) Whatever benefits and privileges belonged to the former diſpenſation, continue to flow on to the preſent, if not *expreſsly* repealed; for the change of a diſpenſation, *of itſelf*, is no adequate cauſe of their abrogation. That would be as unreaſonable as to ſuppoſe that the bare change from night to day was, *of itſelf*, an adequate cauſe of a man's being diſinherited. Or we may as well ſay, that the abſtract notion of an epoch in chronology has a real influence on the ſequence of events. Whatever covenant privileges, therefore, belonged to Noah and his family *before* the deluge, if not expreſsly repealed, muſt belong to them *after* the deluge. But,

(2.) So far were theſe privileges from being abridged at this period, that they were greatly enlarged and confirmed, by additional diſcoveries. For thus we read, Gen. vi. 18. *But with thee will I* ESTABLISH MY COVENANT; *and thou ſhalt come into the ark, thou, and thy ſons, and thy wife, and thy ſons' wives with thee.* Again, chap. vii. 1. *And the Lord ſaid unto Noah, Come thou,* AND ALL THY HOUSE *into the ark; for* THEE *have I ſeen righteous before me in this generation.* And again, chap. viii. 20. *And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beaſt, and of every clean fowl, and* OFFERED BURNT OFFERINGS

INGS *on the altar.* Once more, chap. ix. 8, 9, 12, 13. *And God ſpake unto Noah, and to his* SONS *with him, ſaying, And I, behold, I* ESTABLISH *my covenant with* YOU, *and with* YOUR SEED *after you. And God ſaid, This is the* TOKEN OF THE COVENANT —— *I do ſet my bow in the cloud.* Hence we further learn,

(3.) THAT the covenant or divine charter, firſt given to Noah, *included* the preceding; it was the SAME *covenant* with *additional grants:* for the Lord ſays, "I will ESTABLISH my covenant." Leſt Noah ſhould infer that the drowning of the world in wrath diſannulled the well known covenant, God diſſipates his fears, by ſaying, "I will *eſtabliſh* my covenant."

(4) ON Noah's *account*, or *as belonging* to him, ALL HIS HOUSE or family was privileged. The privilege is, — "Come thou, and *all thy houſe* into the ark." The ground and reaſon of that privilege —— "*for THEE have I ſeen righteous.*" It is true, the natural dictates of reaſon and affection, whereby a *father pitieth his children* *, and whereby an infidel *careth for his own, eſpecially thoſe of his own houſe* ‖, would have prompted this righteous perſon to bring *all his family*, (except any adults *refuſed* compliance) into the ark, (*the like figure whereunto is* BAPTISM, as an inſpired teacher aſſures us, 1 Pet. iii. 21.) yet the Lord was pleaſed to brighten his evidence and ſtrengthen his obligations of duty by expreſs revelation.

(5) AFTER

* Pſalm ciii. 13. ‖ 1 Tim. v. 8.

(5) AFTER the flood the institution of *sacrifices* continued as the seal of the *first* part of the covenant; and the *rainbow* was instituted as the seal of the *additional* part, or, as PAREUS calls it, "*appendix* of the covenant of grace †." And here it is worthy of notice, that as the first exhibition of the covenant and its seals respected the offspring of *fœderati*, and the *renewal* or *establishment* of it to Noah retained that privilege in full force: so also the *appendix* of the covenant comprehended his SEED.

(6) RESPECTING this appendix of the covenant of which the rainbow was the seal, tho' we suppose, with WITSIUS, it was not formally and precisely the covenant of grace; yet we observe, with the same excellent author, "it "does not seem consistent with the divine per- "fections, to make such a covenant with every "living creature, but on *supposition* of a cove- "nant of grace, and having a *respect* to it. ‖" And as this covenant, in its universality, implied the covenant of grace, we are not to deny, but the promises of it were also *sealed* to Noah and his seed by the rainbow. (See Rev. iv. 3. x. 8.)

(7) IT is observable, finally, that NOAH, his SONS, and THEIR SEED were *fœderati*, in this ratification of the covenant; consequently whatever *seals* of the covenant belonged to Noah, belonged to *his sons*, and *their seed*, while non-dissentients. § 21. 3.

† Ap. WITS. Oecon. Fœd. Lib. iv. cap. vii. § 19. ‖ Ibid.

§ 21. 3. APPEAL we next to a very important period of facred hiſtory, viz. From Abraham to Moſes. On this alſo we make the following remarks.

(1) THE Abrahamic covenant *included* the preceding diſpenſations, on the general principle — that grants and privileges continue in force until *repealed*. Which repealing, if it be not either *expreſs*, or ariſe from the nature of the caſe, in itſelf *plain*, can have no binding influence, that is to ſay, no exiſtence at all: except we maintain, that we are *bound* to reſign an important good without an aſſignable cauſe; which is in fact to maintain that we ought to *deny* that to be, which is.

(2) I SUPPOSE it will be granted, that the *principal bleſſing* exhibited in the foregoing diſpenſations was THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH; the great importance of which to the human race, in every age of the world, no one will deny who conſiders things *as they are*. This covenant, therefore, was in force to Abraham *prior* to what is called the Abrahamic diſpenſation; and in this connection we might mention Lot and his family. But, behold,

(3) A MOST explicit ratification of it, with *ſuperadded* favours, Gen. xii. 3. —— IN THEE SHALL ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED. Chap. xvii. 7. *And I will* ESTABLISH MY COVENANT *between me and thee, and thy* SEED *after thee, in their generations, for an everlaſting covenant*; TO BE A GOD UNTO THEE AND

AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE. *v.* 10. *This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you,* AND THY SEED *after thee*: every MAN-*child among you shall be* CIRCUMCISED. *v.* 12. *He that is* EIGHT DAYS OLD *shall be circumcised among you, every* MAN-*child in your generations; he that is born in the house,* OR BOUGHT WITH MONEY OF ANY STRANGER, *which is not of thy seed. v.* 24—27. *And Abraham was* NINETY YEARS OLD AND NINE, *when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was* THIRTEEN YEARS OLD, *when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the* SELF SAME DAY *was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And* ALL THE MEN OF HIS HOUSE, *born in the house, and* BOUGHT WITH MONEY OF THE STRANGER, *were circumcised with him.* Hence we learn,

(4) THE *nature* and *extent* of the ABRAHAMIC COVENANT or PROMISE. Whatever *blessings* are *promised* to ruined man, must be *in virtue* of the covenant of grace. All promised blessings, therefore, must *imply* an EXHIBITION of *gospel grace.* And the glad tidings of salvation thro' Christ preached to the GENTILE WORLD, is expressly called — THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM (Gal. iii. 14.) Not that this *link* is the FIRST in the chain of exhibited mercy to the fallen race *in general,* or with an universal and unlimited aspect, if the reasoning in the last sections be just: but for its *explicitness,* and *precious* (because expressly diffusive) intend-

ment, it may be juſtly termed a GOLDEN LINK. In this reſpect Abraham may well be ſtiled — *The* FATHER *of us all*; not to the diſavowal of Noah, with whom the covenant was before ratified, or Eve, who received the *firſt* intimation of it, and who in *this* reſpect eminently may be called —— *The* MOTHER *of all living*. The *covenant* of grace, in its external manifeſtation, containing *an* EXHIBITION of *exceeding great and precious* PROMISES to every human being on the face of the globe, to whom providence directs the joyful news, may be compared to a flowing ſtream: it proceeds ultimately from the immenſe ocean of ſovereign grace in Chriſt; its *firſt* viſible ſource we trace to paradiſe, where it riſes in a ſmall ſpring, and glides on to Noah. During this part of its progreſs, there were but few comparatively who participated of its cleanſing and healing virtues, tho' none were debarred from it. This continuing to glide along, without interruption, (notwithſtanding God's awful viſitation of a corrupt world by the deluge) we diſcern thro' the perſon of Noah *another* ſource, whence is poured forth a ſecond ſtream which empties itſelf into the former channel. The ſtreams thus *united* become a river, which flows on to Abraham —— a river to which *all* are invited, but *few* come, and theſe made willing by the omnipotent energy of *divine influence* which obſerves the laws of another —— a HIDDEN diſpenſation, running parallel as it were

were with the former; which was alſo the caſe in the preceding period. Then, thro' the highly honoured perſon of Abraham we behold another mighty ſpring copiouſly pouring forth the waters of ſalvation, and again uniting itſelf to the former river; and from him to Chriſt, with a wide majeſtic flow, it proceeds along the conſecrated channel of the Jewiſh nation; gradually increaſing by the acceſſion of other ſtreams, till it arrives at the Saviour's finiſhed work; where, impatient of confinement, it breaks over its banks on every ſide, and the healing waters flow to the moſt diſtant regions—THAT THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM MIGHT COME UPON THE GENTILES. (Gal. iii. 14, 8. compared with Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxii. 18.) Paul expreſsly ſays, that "the GOSPEL (even the very ſame as the New Teſtament contains—*ſalvation by* GRACE) "was preached to Abraham:" And (Heb. iv. 2.) it was preached to his unbelieving deſcendants in the wilderneſs.

(5) As it is *natural* to expect, that whatever exhibition of privileges the parents enjoyed ſhould be extended to their children, in common with themſelves; ſo we find that *in fact* they are *expreſsly included* in *this* diſpenſation as well as the preceding. The covenant is eſtabliſhed between God and Abraham's SEED, *in the* VERY SAME *ſenſe* as with Abraham HIMSELF; the eſſence of which is—TO BE A GOD TO HIM AND HIS SEED. And leſt it ſhould be objected that the term *ſeed* refers to his *adult*

poſterity who ſhould tread in his ſteps, to the excluſion of infants, all doubt is diſſipated by the appointment of applying the *ſeal* of the covenant in early infancy.

(6) *Sacrifices* continuing in full force to SEAL the covenant, till the divine oblation ſhould be made; and the *bow* of the covenant continuing as a token and SEAL of it, until the Meſſiah's *ſecond* coming; at the commencement of this period is given an *additional* ſeal—CIRCUMCISION. The very *nature* of the rite ſhews that all *females* are excluded from being the ſubjects of it; as well as the diſcriminating ſpecification — *every MAN-child.* Here obſerve in general, that children, in this rite, have the ſame privileges as their parents. The males are treated as Abraham, and the females as Sarah: *Theſe*, therefore, had the covenant ſealed in the ſame manner as their honoured mother. Again: tho' Sarah and her ſex were not the *ſubjects* of this rite, they were conſtant *witneſſes* to the inſtitution; and therefore there was an important ſenſe in which circumciſion was a ſeal to Sarah and her daughters: a ſenſe analogous to that in which ſacrifices were.

(7) EVERY domeſtic head being, in truth, a prophet, prieſt, and king, in his own family; a queſtion muſt ariſe, Whether the covenant and its ſeals are reſtricted to the parent head of the family, and his children, or elſe extended to the *other domeſtics?* Nor would the queſtion be unimportant; for his *inſtructions*, his *prayers*, and *commands*, anſwerable to his three-

fold

fold office, must be directed accordingly. To this question right reason replies: If the covenant and its seals are *beneficial* to all capable subjects, benevolence requires that they should be extended to the other *non-dissenting* members — except forbidden by indisputable authority. This is the voice of reason; and we find that this is the voice of God. The privilege is common to the seed, and to *him that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger*, WHICH IS NOT OF THE SEED, Gen. xvii. 12.

§ 22. IT has been objected, "that the covenant with Abraham was a covenant of *peculiarity* only, and that circumcision was no more than a token of *that* covenant;" but if so, as Mr. HENRY observes, "how came it that all PRO-"SELYTES, of what nation soever, even *the* "*strangers*, were to be circumcised; tho' not "being of any of the tribes, they had no part "or lot in the land of Canaan? The extending "the seal of circumcision to *proselyted strangers*, "and to THEIR SEED, was a plain indication, "that the New Testament administration of the "covenant of grace would reach, not to the cove-"nanters only, but their *seed**." But it has been proved that circumcision *sealed* to Abraham and his seed *the righteousness of faith*; and therefore it does not affect the point in debate to contend that temporal promises were sealed *also*. The reader is referred to Chap. ii. § 23, &c. where the subject has been considered at large.

* Treatise on Bapt. p. 89.

§ 23. 4. We next appeal to the long and intereſting period from Moſes to Chriſt. On which let the following obſervations be conſidered.

(1) Whatever appertained to the Abrahamic covenant was not diſannulled by the Moſaic diſpenſation. This St. Paul aſſerts in plain terms, Gal. iii. 17.

(2) It may not be amiſs to take notice, before we proceed, of Job's family; who, being as is generally ſuppoſed, cotemporary with Moſes, and unconnected with his hiſtory, deſerves a previous regard. Of him it is ſaid, that "he "*ſanctified* his children, and roſe up early in "the morning, and *offered burnt offerings*, ac- "cording to the *number of them all*—Thus did "Job *continually*," or, all the days. (Job i. 5.) On this I would only obſerve, let the *ſanctifying* be what it may, the *ſacrifices* muſt have been of divine inſtitution, and uſed by Job, being an eminently righteous man, as the *ſeals* of the covenant of grace;—with reſpect to his children *ſeparately*.

(3) Superadded to the foregoing ſeals of the covenant, is the passover; a divine rite of the nature of a ſacrifice, inſtituted in memory of Iſrael's deliverance out of Egypt, repreſenting and ſealing ſpiritual bleſſings. "As to the *gueſts*, "ſays Witsius, they were, firſt, all native "*Iſraelites*, who were not excluded by legal un- "cleanneſs. For *all the congregation of Iſrael* is "commanded to ſolemnize the paſſover. (Exod. "xii. 6. 47.) And, next, the *Proſelytes* circum-

"ciſed

" cised and become Jews; (Esth. viii. 17.) " whether bondmen born in the house or bought " with money, &c. Exod. xii. 48. *When a* " STRANGER *will sojourn with thee, and keep the* " *passover to the Lord, let* ALL HIS MALES *be cir-* " *cumcised, and then let him come near and keep it,* " *and he shall be as one that is born in the land*‡." On this passage in Exodus, Dr. JENNINGS observes these two things: " *First*, That when a " man thus became a Proselyte, *all his males* " were to be circumcised *as well as himself*, where- " by his *children* were admitted into the visible " church of God, *in his right*, as their father. " *Secondly*, That upon this, he should be *entitled* " *to all the privileges* and immunities of the " Jewish church and nation, as well as be sub- " ject to the whole law: He should be as "one " born in the land§." In short; not only men and women, but also young children partook of this ordinance, *as soon as they were capable* of answering the revealed design of it, for — no POSITIVE rule was given them on this head, like that of circumcision. It is manifest that since the injunction respected not only individuals of such a description, but also families *as such*, every member without exception had a *legal right* to the ordinance; and nothing prevented *infants* from a participation, but what lay in the *natural* incapacity to answer the design of it.

‡ WITS. Oecon. Fœd. Lib. iv. cap. xii. § 11.

§ Jewish Antiq. vol. 1. p. 132.

(4) "BESIDES the *ordinary* and *univerſal* "ſacraments of *circumciſion* and the *paſſover*, "ſome *extraordinary* ſymbols of divine grace "were granted to the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs, "which in the New Teſtament are applied to "Chriſt and his benefits, and ſaid to have the ſame "ſignification with our ſacraments. And they are "in order theſe — The PASSAGE in the cloud "THRO' THE RED SEA — the MANNA which was "rained from heaven — The WATER iſſuing out "of the ROCK — and the BRAZEN SERPENT "erected by Moſes for the cure of the Iſ-"raelites*." To this we may add, among other things, with the author now referred to — the clear and familiar diſplay of the DIVINE MAJESTY — and the adumbration of divine myſteries daily *ſealed* by religious CEREMONIES. Our ſubject does not call for an inveſtigation of theſe particulars, but I would remark in general, that the principle for which we contend, is ſo far from being weakened, that it is abundantly corroborated by the inſpired teſtimony of every diſpenſation, and the Moſaic in particular — That it is a common dictate of right reaſon, children ſhould from their earlieſt infancy ſhare in their parents' privileges, as far as they are capable, when no poſitive authority contravenes it.

§ 24. FROM the preceding induction of ſacred evidence in favour of children being ſharers of the ſeals of grace in common with their parents, we conclude, that for the ſpace of four thouſand

* WITSIUS *ut ſupra*, cap. x. § 1.

thouſand years, that is to ſay, FROM THE CREATION TO CHRIST, it was a rule *univerſally* incumbent on parents to treat their children as entitled to religious privileges *equally* with themſelves, according to their capacity. — And as a counterpart of what was obſerved of privileges, we may remark that, in virtue of the ſame uniform principle, often when the parents were puniſhed with excommunication or death, their infant children were included with them. As might be inſtanced in — the deluge—the deſtruction of Sodom and Gomorrah — the caſe of Achan the Son of Zerah (Joſh. vii. 24.) — the matter of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram — the caſe of the conquered nations (Deut. xx. 16, 17.) — and many more inſtances, down to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. Far be it from us to ſuppoſe, that the parents' crimes and impenitence made their ſuffering children incapable of *mercy* — that mercy which proceeds on an inviſible plan, and belongs to a purely ſpiritual diſpenſation. Yet, that children, during their *dependence* on their parents, ſhould ſhare equally with them in judgments and mercies externally, is the effect of an all-wiſe conſtitution coeval with mankind.

§ 25. Mr. B. when treating of *external covenant relation*, objects: " All reaſoning from *data* of a moral kind and the ſuppoſed fitneſs of things, or from the natural relation of children to parents, is wide of the mark. As baptiſm is not a duty *naturally* reſulting from our relation to God, as *reaſonable* creatures; for then it

would be incumbent on *every man* to be baptized: as our obligation to regard it does not arise from any moral, or civil relation, in which we necessarily stand to our fellow creatures; for then the same consequence would inevitably follow: and as this duty does not originate in the natural relation between parents and children; for then *all* parents, *whoever they be*, would lie under an obligation to have their infants baptized: so it is altogether vain to search any where for the proper subjects of baptism, except in the appointment of Christ and apostolic practice; these being the only rule and law of its administration†." But this objection, however plausible, does by no means affect the above reasoning. For, *data* of a moral kind are very good ones, when no positive evidence lies against them. Besides, there appears to me a manifest impropriety (not to say impertinence) in making the *kind* of argumentation an objectionable matter. For it is demonstrable, that positive laws, tho' they conclude *affirmatively*, do not conclude *negatively*, except in matters that are absolutely indefensible on all *data* whatever. Nothing can possibly be established by sound reasoning, but what is *reasonable and right*; and when this is done, it is plain that nothing but *affirmative* positive evidence can invalidate the conclusion. The conduct of our opponents in this instance is not unlike that of Arminians when disputing with Calvinists. It is objected to

† Pœdob. Exam. p. 286.

to the latter that their reasoning is *metaphysical*, or may be reduced to the science of *metaphysicks*, and to the Pœdobaptists that their reasoning is of the *moral* kind. But the cavil is well refuted by a masterly pen; part of which refutation, *mutatis mutandis*, we here apply: "If the reasoning be "good, 'tis as frivolous to inquire what science "it is properly reduced to, as what language it "is delivered in: and for a man to go about to "confute the arguments of his opponent, by "telling him, his arguments are *metaphysical* [or "of a *moral* kind] would be as weak as to tell "him, his arguments could not be substantial, "because they were not written in *French* or "*Latin*. The question is not, Whether what "is said be Metaphysicks, Physicks, Logick, or "Mathematicks [*morality*, divinity or criticism] "*Latin*, *French*, *English*, or *Mohawk?* But, "whether the reasoning be GOOD, and the ar-"guments truly CONCLUSIVE? The foregoing "arguments are no more metaphysical [or "*moral*] than those which we use against the "Papists, to disprove their doctrine of *transub-*"*stantiation*; alledging, it is inconsistent with "the notion of corporeal identity, that it should "be in ten thousand places at the same time.—I "am willing my arguments should be brought to "the test of the justest and strictest reason, and "that a clear, distinct and determinate meaning "of the terms I use should be insisted on; but "let not the whole be rejected, as if all were

" confuted, by fixing on it the epithet‖"—*moral*, conſequential, or analogical.—"As to the arguments " I have made uſe of, if they are *quibbles* [adapted " to dazzle " the eye of a ſuperficial obſerver" " only] they may be ſhewn to be ſo: ſuch " knots are capable of being untied, and the trick " and cheat may be detected and plainly laid " open. If this be *fairly* done, with reſpect to " the grounds and reaſons I have relied upon, " I ſhall have juſt occaſion for the future to be " ſilent, if not to be aſhamed of my argumenta- " tions. I am willing my proof ſhould be tho- " roughly examined; and if there be nothing " but *Begging of the queſtion*, or mere *Logomachy*, " or diſpute of words, let it be made manifeſt, " and ſhewn how the ſeeming ſtrength of the " argument depends on my *uſing words without* " *a meaning*, or ariſes from the ambiguity of " terms, or my making uſe of words in an " indeterminate and unſteady manner; and that " the weight of my reaſons reſts mainly on ſuch " a foundation: and then I ſhall either be ready " to retract what I have urged, and thank the " man that has done the kind part, or ſhall be " juſtly expoſed for my obſtinacy†."

§ 26. BUT what has Mr. B. to urge in ſupport of his aſſertion, that " reaſoning from *data* of a *moral* kind, and the ſuppoſed *fitneſs* of things, or from the *natural relation* of children to parents is

‖ EDWARDS's Inquiry into the freedom of the will, p. 390.

† *Ut ſupra*, p. 393.

is wide of the mark?" *His* reasoning is, "If *baptism* were a duty, naturally resulting from our relation to God, as reasonable creatures, then it would be incumbent on *every man* to be baptized." And what a dreadful consequence! But will our author favour us with the curious intelligence of *any man* unbaptized, in a christian country, on whom it is *not* incumbent to be baptized? The objection confounds two things which in reality are quite distinct. It makes no difference between an obligation to perform a duty *before* it is revealed, and *after* it is revealed. Neither the righteousness of faith, nor any part of the gospel mystery, demand the belief and cordial reception of mankind, *before* they are promulged; such a revealed exhibition of mercy depending on the divine pleasure, with which only a small part of the human race is actually favoured; but does it follow, either—that the African Hottentots, who are without such a revelation, *are* under obligation to believe what they have not heard, or—that any in a christian land *are not* laid under obligation to believe and practise what is revealed to them? And does not this obligation "naturally result from our relation to God as reasonable creatures?" For can any thing be more reasonable than that we should thankfully receive what revelation testifies is a proffered mercy? Methinks it requires no great labour to shew—that if the exhibition of grace be a *benefit* to man, it is his DUTY to receive it; and that the denial of this tends directly

to

to ſap the foundation of religion and morals. In like manner *baptiſm*, as a ſeal appended to the goſpel covenant, is as much a matter of *revelation* as the covenant itſelf; but *this* is no ſufficient reaſon why the ſeal ſhould not be obligatory in as extenſive a manner as the inſtrument ſealed. On new diſcoveries being made to the creature, or benefits beſtowed on him, new relations commence; and hence duties *naturally* reſult, anſwerable to theſe relations, with all that certainty and univerſality which belong to duties reſulting from *unrevealed* relations.

AGAIN: our Author draws another conſequence equally formidable: "If the duty of parents to baptize their children originate in the *natural relation* between parents and children, then [ſad alternative!] *all* parents, *whoever they be*, would lie under an obligation to have their infants baptized." We are ſtill at a loſs to find out wherein lies the inconvenience of the intended concluſion. For we have no objection at all to the idea, that *all* parents, *whoever they be*, IN A CHRISTIAN COUNTRY, lie under an obligation to have their infants baptized; but if my opponent objects to the clauſe *in a chriſtian country*, as acknowledging *others not* being under the obligation, and therefore not originating in a *natural relation* between parents and children, it will do him no ſervice; until he demonſtrate either—that this *natural relation does* NOT *oblige all* parents without exception to BENEFIT their children, in every part of the globe and every period of time,

as

as we maintain; or—that baptism is NO BENEFIT to infants, in opposition to those arguments that shew it IS a benefit. But the *nature* of the benefit, or the *manner* whereby it appears to be so, make no part of the *criteria* whereby we should judge, that the duty originates in the natural relation between parents and children. Whether the *benefit* relate to the body or the mind, to property or liberty, to politicks or morals, to time or eternity, to the chief or an inferior good,—is out of the question: and, Whether it *appear to be a benefit* by the medium of sense or testimony, of right reason or revealed facts, by direct assertion in scripture or just consequence, by positive or moral evidence, or by any other mode whatever of collecting the *fact*, —is equally immaterial. For it still follows, that the parent's *duty* originates in a *natural relation* between him and his child, be the *nature* of the benefit, and the *mode* of ascertaining it, what they may.

§ 27. OUR author still objects: "Were it allowable to reason from *covenant interest*, to the enjoyment of a *positive rite*, Abraham and his posterity might——have circumcised their FEMALES! in some way or other*." His reasons are,—"circumcision is a *sign* of the covenant —that covenant extends its benign influences to *both* sexes—God has made us *reasonable* creatures; and he requires that we should use our intellectual powers, on the nature, the application, and the design of all his institutions. Hence it appears

* Pædob. Exam. p. 287.

appears, (says he) that a little *reasoning* on the covenant made with Abraham, and a few deductions from the nature and fitness of things, would have inferred the right of Jewish *females* to circumcision, in a manner similar to that by which our brethren endeavour to authenticate the baptism of infants*." On this singular argument *ad hominem* I make these two remarks.

1. OUR author seems to make no manner of difference between the solid deductions of right reason, and the specious pretences of sophistry. For, according to him, nothing more is necessary to establish the propriety of female circumcision, but to admit this *datum* of arguing from *covenant interest*. But we deny that any such consequence would follow, for two plain reasons. First, the *most evident* revealed account of the *nature* and design of the institution forbid it; in confirmation of which, we appeal to impartiality itself, and the *universal* suffrage of Jews and Christians. *Secondly*, The phrase—*every MAN-child*—is so decisive in itself, and so often repeated in the institution, as to put it out of all doubt; in favour of which we might again refer to the whole body of Jews and Christians, who *(nem. con.)* understand the males *exclusively*.

2. THO' we contend for the *proper use* of moral and analogical arguments, we do not suppose that they conclude *in opposition* to positive evidence, but only *in subordination* to it. Common-sense, like common law, ought to influence our proceedings

* Pædob. Exam. p. 287.

proceedings when not controuled by *superior* authority; but in proportion as decisive statute evidence appears, the operation of the *inferior* principle is suspended.

§ 28. Once more: "It is worthy of consideration, says Mr. B. whether this doctrine concerning the *federal interest* of infants, be not calculated *to harden their consciences* in an unconverted state, and to flush them with *false hopes*, when grown to years of reflection." This objection has been frequently urged by the Antipædobaptists, but with how little justice and force, may appear from the following observations.

1. If this federal interest consist, as the current of Pædobaptist writers hold, in the children's being entitled to the *external privileges* of the covenant *in common* with their parents; how can this *tend* "to harden their consciences," or "to flush them with false hopes," *more* than their *parents?* Or when these latter *abuse* their privileges, are we to infer, that such privileges are *calculated* "to harden their consciences," or "to flush them with false hopes?" But if such arguing be fallacious in the *one* case, it must be equally so in the *other*.

2. It seems absolutely unaccountable, nay demonstrably absurd, to suppose that this federal interest, including divine grants, blessings, benefits and privileges, should, in its *native tendency*, "flush any with *false hopes*." The effects it is calculated" to produce are such as these—repentance

— can-

—caution—thankfulneſs,—gratitude— obedience, &c. With equal propriety may we pronounce, on the principle of the objection, that the *federal intereſt* of Jewiſh infants, their church membership, their right to the ſeals and ſhadows of grace in common with their parents;—that the poſſeſſion of Canaan, the worſhip of the temple, the ſpirit of prophecy, and the promiſe of the Meſſiah;—that our Lord's preaching and mighty works among the Jews—were all "calculated" to *harden* the conſciences of that people, and to fluſh them with *falſe hopes!*

3. It is the united language of thoſe who maintain the children's *federal intereſt* in their parents' privileges, that an *abuſe* and *miſimprovement* thereof heighten their guilt and danger; which neceſſarily implies, that the thing itſelf is a real good. Thus Mr. Strong: "That it is a ſpe-
"cial privilege for *parents* and *children*, that they
"[the children] are taken into their parents'
"covenant, will appear by theſe arguments and
"demonſtrations.——It will *aggravate their ſin*
"if they *abuſe* it; therefore it's a mercy and a pri-
"vilege *in itſelf:* for what is not a mercy and
"privilege in itſelf, that *cannot* add to a man's
"ſin and judgment. Now as it is in riches and
"honours, and all the bleſſings in this life, they
"will be unto a man *judgments* if they are
"*abuſed*; therefore they are bleſſings in them-
"ſelves; bleſſings in the *thing*, tho' a ſnare to
"the *man*. So this very argument, that is
"brought to prove that they are no bleſſings, and
"give

" give no benefit, doth clearly prove, that the " *thing itself* is a privilege and a *blessing*. —— For " a child to be disinherited, and cast out of his " father's covenant, is a very great *judgment*, and " the forest of all outward afflictions that can " befal a man; as we see in Cain — *Thou hast* " *cast me out from the face of the earth, and from* " *thy face I shall be hid.* It is the sentence of " excommunication that the Lord passeth upon " Cain: and so upon Ishmael — *Cast out the* " *bond woman and her son:* —— Now if it be a " *great judgment* to be *cast out*, surely it is a *great* " *privilege* to be *taken into* their parent's cove- " nant. —— It is promised as a special *blessing* for " the visible church of God to continue in any " man's posterity. So it was in Seth, Gen. iv. " 25. in Shem, Gen. ix. 27. In the family of " Aaron, and afterwards of Phineas, and David. " — And it is looked upon as a great *judgment* " for a family and a posterity to be disinherited: " as in Esau, Saul, and Cham. —— It is the " greatest wrath that God doth pour out upon " men in this life, to cast them out of external " church privileges. The Apostle saith [of the " Jews] *Wrath is come upon them to the uttermost:* " therefore if the wrath be so great in a casting " out, surely there is a great deal of mercy " shewed in the taking in. — The Apostle speaks " even of an interest in the external privileges " of the covenant as a very great matter, Rom. " iii. 1, 2. — To be cast out from being a visible " member is the greatest judgment that can be-

" fal

" fal a perſon or people in this life. 1 Cor. " v. 5.——Hoſ. 1. 1—9. There is a pedigree " of judgments ſet down, but yet the higheſt " is *Lo-ammi*‖."

§ 29. (3.) WE come next to conſider the language of prophecy reſpecting goſpel times. On which obſerve in general,

1. THAT the *evidence* of prophecy, in its own nature, is direct and pertinent; and when its meaning is aſcertained, its verdict *(cæteris paribus)* is indiſputable.

2. THERE are ſome *ſubjects* of prophecy which, in their own nature, are more plain, while others are intricate. It is often difficult to aſcertain with exactneſs points of chronology, the duration of empires, the identity of ſovereigns, and the like; but the nature of the caſe is ſuch, that ——while we are inveſtigating this queſtion, Whether the offſpring of parent ſubjects of the goſpel diſpenſation are or are not to be conſidered as parts of their parents, to ſhare with them in all the church privileges of which they are capable——we may with comparative eaſe learn the inſpired meaning. Beſides,

3. WHATEVER affirmative poſitive evidence our ſubject derives from prophetic language is *ex abundanti*; for ſince infants did actually make a part of God's church at the time of delivering theſe prophecies, and ever had been held in that relation from the beginning of the world, it is evident that we ought to be influenced by nothing ſhort

‖ Diſcourſe on the two Covenants. p. 208, 209, 212.

ſhort of a deciſive contravention from the Supreme Head of the church, to alter our conduct towards our offspring: and whatever the ſpirit of prophecy pronounces in their favour, is the addition of light to light.

4. AND, relative to the *national* aſpect of prophecies, tho' addreſſed to *individuals*, Bp. NEWTON, (when ſpeaking of the curſe of Canaan, the bleſſing of Shem, and the enlargement of Japhet) ſays: "It is thinking meanly of the ancient prophecies of ſcripture, and having very imperfect, very unworthy conceptions of them, to limit their intention to particular perſons. In this view the ancient prophets would be really what the Deiſts think them, little better than common fortune-tellers; and their prophecies would hardly be worth remembering or recording, eſpecially in ſo conciſe and compendious a hiſtory as that of Moſes. We muſt affix a larger meaning to them, and underſtand them not of ſingle perſons, but of *whole nations*; and thereby a nobler ſcene of things, and a more extenſive proſpect will be opened to us of the divine diſpenſations‖."

§ 30. IF any prophecies repreſent decidedly chriſtian converſions in a *national* view, I think it muſt be allowed, that the *infant* part, on a fair conſtruction, muſt be included in ſuch an idea. Out of many paſſages that might be adduced to this purpoſe, I ſhall inſiſt but on the few following.

GENESIS

‖ Diſſert. on Proph. vol. i. p. 14.

GENESIS xii. 3. *In thee ſhall* ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH *be bleſſed.* And chap. xxvi. 4. *In thy ſeed ſhall* ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH *be bleſſed.* Theſe paſſages are not only precious *promiſes*, but alſo important *prophecies*; the former delivered to Abraham, the latter, being a repetition and confirmation of it, to Iſaac. And the ſame was expreſsly made to Jacob afterwards (chap. xxviii. 14.) It is evident, the terms *families* and *nations* are here uſed ſynonymouſly; nor does there appear any neceſſity, or ſufficient ground, for underſtanding them otherwiſe than *indefinite*, comprehending the *general body*, great and ſmall, of people inhabiting certain territories and provinces. Whether our Lord intended ſuch *national converſions* in his commiſſion to—*diſciple all* NATIONS, Matt. xxviii. 19. ſhall be further conſidered.——Again, when Iſaac unwittingly bleſſed his ſon Jacob he ſaid, chap. xxvii. 29. *Let* PEOPLE *ſerve thee and* NATIONS *bow down to thee*, &c. "When the gentiles were converted "to chriſtianity, the prophecy was fulfilled li- "terally, and will more amply be fulfilled, when "*the fulneſs of the gentiles ſhall come in, and all* "*Iſrael ſhall be ſaved*†."

PSALM lxxii. 11. *Yea all kings ſhall fall down before him* [the Meſſiah]; *all* NATIONS *ſhall ſerve him.* ver. 17. *ult. all* NATIONS *ſhall call him bleſſed.* I believe it is generally agreed, that divers paſſages in this Pſalm are quite inapplicable to Solomon, tho' entitled, "*A Pſalm for Solomon*," and

† NEWTON's Diſſert. *ut ſupra.* p. 83.

and equally so to any other King but the *Messiah*. It should therefore be considered as referring to Solomon but imperfectly, while it has its clear and full accomplishment in Christ and the gospel dispensation. And from these passages of this prophetick sublime Psalm it appears,

1. THAT the Messiah's kingdom, in its *external* aspect, should have kings and their subjects, or *whole nations*, as such, included in it.

2. THAT in some future period this should be *universally* the desirable case. *All* kings shall submit and worship; *all* nations shall become his subjects, to serve him and call him blessed. To the like purpose is Ps. lxxxii. 8. *ult.*

ISAIAH xix. 23—25. *In that day, shall there be a hight-way*, &c. On which passage Bp. NEWTON thus remarks: "By the means of the Jews and proselytes dwelling in Egypt and Syria, Israel, Egypt and Syria were in some measure united in the same worship. But this was *more fully* accomplished, when these countries became christian, and so were made members of the same body in Christ Jesus. And we piously hope and believe, that it will receive its most perfect completion in the latter days, when *Mohammedism* shall be rooted out, and *Christianity* shall again flourish in these countries, when *the fulness of the gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved*§." On the whole it appears, That *Egypt* and *Assyria*, whether they stand for the converted Gentile nations indefinitely, or those countries literally, should be on the *same footing* with Israel in this particular, viz. Their conversion would be

§ Ib. p. 378.

be *national*, and *not* confined to adults *only*. On Antipœdobaptiſt principles, none ſhould be deemed ſubjects of the goſpel kingdom externally, but thoſe adults who make a credible profeſſion; but how well this agrees with the prophetick repreſentations of *national* converſions, let the impartial judge.

VERY remarkable to the ſame purpoſe is another text in the ſame prophet, chap. lii. 15. *So ſhall* HE SPRINKLE MANY NATIONS. On which obſerve,

1. THAT the term HE refers to Chriſt, is very evident from the context; and many of the Jewiſh doctors, as well as the Chaldee paraphraſt, apply it directly to the Meſſiah; and ſo ſtriking is the reference to *Chriſt*, that it is ſaid, "divers Jews have been convinced and converted to the Chriſtian faith, by the evidence of this prophecy."

2. IT is as clear, that the ACTION here aſcribed to him relates to the *New Teſtament* Diſpenſation.

3. THE obvious and natural acceptation of the term SPRINKLE, in this connection, is that of *purifying*; and it undoubtedly *alludes* to thoſe Jewiſh ceremonial purifications which were performed by ſprinkling perſons and things.

4. THO' theſe ceremonial ſprinklings under the law repreſented and typified the atoning blood of Chriſt, and the cleanſing efficacy of his grace, yet it would be forced and unnatural to aſcribe this internal, ſpiritual, and ſaving influence, to MANY NATIONS. Therefore,

5. THE prediction properly and directly intends that *external holineſs* whereby *Chriſtian nations* are pro-

profeſſionally *diſtinguiſhed* from others. And how great the privilege, how ſignal the honour, conferred on ſuch nations! They are *ſet apart* by a gracious diſtinguiſhing Providence, and by the proſelyting ordinance, to be to the Lord *a people*, while he exhibits himſelf to be to them *a God!* Bleſſed is the people that is in ſuch a caſe, yea bleſſed is the *nation* that has *the* LORD for its God! But

6. MUST we *exclude* infants from being parts of theſe *nations*, and from the privileges of their parents? The law of nature, that is, the *law of God*, and the analogy of all divine diſpenſations that were ever made known to man, forbid the contracted thought, while unſupported by any ſo much as pretended divine warrant.

7. IT appears from the New Teſtament records that the appointed ordinance of initiation into this ſtate of relative holineſs, individually and *explicitly*, is, the Chriſtian purification — BAPTISM. Conſequently,

8. FROM the premiſes it unavoidably follows — That the ſpirit of prophecy, in this paſſage, affords a venerable and ſacred ſanction to Pœdobaptiſt principles.

WHETHER the interpretation now given, or Dr. S's, who ſays of this text, "The plain meaning is, that his doctrine ſhould deſcend like rain upon many nations and people†," be moſt agreeable to truth, let the impartial reader judge.

§ 31. THIS *national* (and conſequently *Pœdo-*

† Remarks on the *Chriſtian Miniſter's Reaſons*, &c. p. 3.

baptiſt) view of the goſpel diſpenſation, is implied in many more prophetick paſſages, Iſa. lv. 5. *Behold thou ſhalt call a* NATION *that thou knoweſt not, and* NATIONS *that knew not thee ſhall run unto thee, becauſe of the Lord thy God, &c.* Jer. iv. 2. *ult. The* NATIONS *ſhall bleſs themſelves in him, and in him ſhall they glory.* Dan. vii. 14. *And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all* PEOPLE, NATIONS, *and languages ſhould ſerve him.* Ver. 27. *ult. And all* DOMINIONS *ſhall ſerve him.* Mic. iv. 2. *And* MANY NATIONS *ſhall come, and ſay, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, &c.* Zech. ii. 11. *And* MANY NATIONS *ſhall be* JOINED TO THE LORD *in that day, and ſhall be* MY PEOPLE. To which we may add, Matt. xxi. 43. *Therefore ſay I unto you,* THE KINGDOM OF GOD *ſhall be taken from you, and* GIVEN TO A NATION *bringing forth the fruits thereof.* Rev. xi. 15. *ult.* THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST. Here I obſerve,

1. THAT the phraſe, "the kingdoms of this world," in the laſt text, muſt be underſtood in its plain literal import, from the obvious oppoſition intended between it and the other, "the kingdoms of our Lord;" and for a like reaſon, the *latter* muſt intend KINGDOMS PROFESSEDLY CHRISTIAN. For the words are a prophetick repreſentation of what *ſhould* take place in ſome future period of the Chriſtian church. Now in what ſenſe can the KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD

BECOME

BECOME the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ, if not in that we contend for? They were *his* in every other sense *prior* to the date of this prophecy. They were *always* the Lord's as the God of *providence*. By HIM kings have ever reigned, and princes decreed justice. Nor was there ever a time when the whole earth was not HIS, and the fulness thereof, with all its nations and kingdoms; to enlarge or contract them; to raise or to sink them; to cause and regulate their revolutions and successions in every age. It remains, therefore, that Christian kingdoms are the *Lord's* in a sense similar to that in which Israel was *his*; with this difference, that the yoke of Mosaic ceremonies should be removed, and a spiritual evangelical worship introduced.

2. OUR Lord (Matt. xxi. 43.) speaks of the kingdom of God being transferred from ONE *nation to* ANOTHER *nation*. Now what less can we infer hence, than—that the kingdom of God was not *abolished* but *transferred* from one people to another—and that the *national* aspect of the former (at least so far as to *include* the children with their parents) should be the subject matter of the transfer. If it be said that what was *taken away* from the one, and *given* to the other, did not imply, notwithstanding, the *church-membership* of infants: I reply, if the church-membership of infants, in the kingdom of God *to be* transferred, be an *essential* part of that kingdom, this essential part must be included in what *was given* to the other nation, or the gentile part

of the world. But the former is true, as might be eaſily ſhewn; and therefore ſo is the latter. And that by the *kingdom of God* we are not to underſtand merely the *preaching of the goſpel*, is deciſively clear hence, viz. That *this* was not what they once *poſſeſſed* and *gloried* in, but their *national adoption*, their church ſtate and privileges; and therefore this latter (from the ſcope of the text) muſt be what was *taken away*, and not merely a preached goſpel. It is true the rejection of the Meſſiah, as the moſt ſignal inſtance of unfruitfulneſs, was the *cauſe* of their vineyard being laid waſte, their branches cut off, and their kingdom transferred; but the apoſtolick reſolution—*lo! we turn to the gentiles*, was by no means the full accompliſhment of the prediction. It intended, as what reſulted from their rejecting the counſel of God againſt themſelves, a *diſinheriting* of the Jewiſh nation, which differs from their *not receiving the goſpel*, as the effect differs from the cauſe. Beſides, the phraſe, "ſhall be given to another nation," is to be conſidered as a *judgment* on thoſe from whom it is taken; but this could not have been the caſe if it meant no more than—henceforth the goſpel, which is preached to you, ſhall be preached to the gentiles *alſo*—for that could be no judgment to any, but a bleſſing to all. Nor is it true *in fact*, that the goſpel was *taken from* the Jews otherwiſe than from any unbelieving gentiles. The commiſſion was, *Go, preach the goſpel to every creature*, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM. And Peter aſſures his brethren, that

that the *gospel* promise, or the exhibition of mercy, is *to them and their children*, as well as to *those that were afar off*. Nor do we find any *repeal* of this grant, this *universal* aspect of the gospel promise, and therefore what was *taken from* them was their CHURCH STATE, whereby *wrath* — this predicted wrath — *came on them to the uttermost*. *From this* they were *broken off*, (and not from the gospel call) and *to this* the gentiles were *adopted*. The *fall* of the one, became the *riches* of the other. What the one *fell from*, the other was *promoted to*; and what can this be, but their *church state* as a body of people?

3. THAT remarkable text in *Zechariah* (chap. ii. 11.) speaks of *many nations* that should, under the gospel dispensation, be *joined to the Lord*, and accounted *his people*. On Antipœdobaptist principles, which deny the church-membership of infants and the validity of their baptism, this prophecy neither has been, nor is ever likely to be, fulfilled in whole or in part. Nay, according to them, it is absolutely *incapable* of being fulfilled. For infants and children ever have made, and ever will make, a very considerable part of a *nation*. But if none, on our opponents' hypothesis, are to be deemed as *joined to the Lord*, but such as make a profession of faith and repentance, not only all infants and young children are struck off from visible church-membership, but, for aught we have *yet* seen, the *bulk* of a nation, or the *far greater* part. Nor will it avail them to say, that this prediction refers to the latter day

glory; for be the day ever ſo glorious, and the ſucceſs of the goſpel ever ſo great; let it be that all the adults in a nation ſhall be born to God in one day, ſtill the *younger part* of the nation, which is very conſiderable in number, muſt not be joined to the Lord; and therefore, if our opponents be right, no NATION, properly ſpeaking, is *capable* of being *joined to the Lord*, and of being *his people*, in any period of the goſpel church however glorious.

§ 32. To this view of *national converſions* it may perhaps be objected, "That the term *nation* in the above places is taken *improperly* and *figuratively*, not for *the whole* of a people ſmall and great, but for a conſiderable *part*, i. e. for thoſe in a nation that would make a profeſſion of their faith and repentance. As in Iſa. xvii. 12, 13, &c. I anſwer,

1. IN all equity the term ſhould be taken according to the nature of the ſubject; which has no reference to the incurſion of *armies*, but the acceſſion of *proſelytes*; which latter ever included the children with their parents.

2. IN the paſſages firſt produced (§ 30.) the words *nations* and *families* are uſed ſynonymouſly; which latter cannot be underſtood in that connection to the *excluſion* of children. Therefore, to *limit* the term nation, to ſignify thoſe in a nation who profeſs faith and repentance, is taking an unwarrantable liberty; a liberty for which no tolerable reaſon, I think, can be aſſigned.

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As to the objection, "That religion is a *personal* thing‖; either it has no force at all against Pœdobaptist principles, or it must condemn all preceding dispensations. But loth to impeach infinite wisdom for giving sanction to infant church-membership in every age of the world, we conclude, that whatever truth is contained in the proposition—"religion is a personal thing"—stands in perfect consistency with our principles.—But if by religion's being a *personal* thing, be implied—that a person's *own consent* is necessary to make him the subject of religious obligations; I dare affirm that the proposition in that sense is of most pernicious tendency. Not less so, than the modern notion of the—"innocence of mental errors!"

Will it be objected, "That God requires to be worshipped *now* in spirit and in truth?" And pray, *when* was it that he did *not* require to be so worshipped? Was Abraham's worship, for instance, of a *carnal* complexion? Was his family religion *less spiritual* than that of those who reject infants, as far as in them lies, from the bosom of the christian church? We cannot help thinking, that those objections which are urged against the church-membership and baptism of infants, drawn from the great *spirituality* of the gospel dispensation, savours not a little of the *Socinian* leaven †, which degrades the Old Testament as much as possible, to keep its votaries in countenance when explaining the New. On the contrary

‖ Dr. Stennett's Answer to Dr. A. p.

† Vid. Marckii Medul. Cap. xii. § 4, 8, 12, 15, &c.

trary, we think it reaſonable to conclude, that the more ſpiritual and excellent the diſpenſation is, the *ſtronger* the argument in favour of Pœdobaptiſt principles and practice.

Or will any ſay, "Suppoſing *all former* diſpenſations admitted infants to a participation of the ſame religious rites with their parents, it does not follow that they *now* muſt." We ſay it *does* follow, by the moſt juſt and certain conſequence, if we have no ſcriptural affirmative evidence to the contrary. For whatever ſource it proceeds from, it is a privilege in itſelf. Whether this *univerſal fact* of infant children having been included with their parents in church privileges, ariſes from its natural reaſonableneſs, and the apparent incongruity, unreaſonableneſs and unnatural ſeverity of the contrary; in other words, from the original *conſtitution of human nature*, whereby its divine Author has not only characterized it as *ſocial* and communicative of benefits, but alſo formed the ſtrongeſt *connection* between the parents and their offſpring, as to all the benefits and privileges of the former: Whether the fact ariſes from this, I ſay, or from a *covenant grant*,—it ſhould not be renounced but by the higheſt authority. And this authority muſt be, if at all exiſting, either an explicit repeal, or an implicit and virtual abrogation. We maintain that *neither* exiſts; and therefore we cannot renounce the church-membership and baptiſm of our infant children, without denying theſe things to be a *privilege*, that is to ſay, without DENYING a plain FACT.

§ 33. But

§ 33. BUT an objection ſtill more formidable yet remains, viz. "If the above prophecies refer to *national converſions*, does not that lead to *national churches?* And what then becomes of the diſſenting and congregational plan?" I reply,

THAT a national eſtabliſhment, if WELL ORDERED, appears more agreeable to the prophetick paſſages we have been conſidering than the Antipœdobaptiſt plan; nay more agreeable to the geral tenor of revelation. I ſay, "well ordered;" for, in the preſent caſe, the queſtion is not how they *are*, but how they *may be* eſtabliſhed. Nor does there appear any irreconcileable difference between a national eſtabliſhment and congregational diſcipline.

IT is neceſſary that infants make a part of nations, but it does not at all follow, that the civil magiſtrate ſhould — be the viſible *head* of the church — preſcribe to all the nation, to the greateſt nicety, the terms of chriſtian communion — publiſh acts which impoſe *uniformity*, rigid uniformity, in religious matters, under heavy penalties — require obedience in things which no one pretends to be vindicable on ſcriptural or rational grounds — and eſpecially ſhould require of miniſters the ſubſcribing of *plain contradictions*.

ON the whole it appears, that the language of prophecy, reſpecting *nations* becoming viſibly *chriſtian*, is quite inimical to the Antipœdobaptiſt hypotheſis. — We now proceed to inveſtigate a few prophetick teſtimonies of another kind.

§ 34. OUT of many that might be urged in favour of infants, let the following be conſidered. Pſalm cii. 28. *The* CHILDREN *of thy* SERVANTS *ſhall continue, and* THEIR SEED *ſhall be eſtabliſhed before thee.* On which I obſerve,

1. THAT theſe words moſt undoubtedly belong to the Chriſtian diſpenſation, as appears from St. Paul's quotation (Heb. i. 11, 12.) of the foregoing verſes; for *thoſe* he expreſsly applies to Chriſt, and *this* ſtands in ſtrict connection with them. It therefore follows, that theſe *ſervants* are the ſervants of Chriſt, and who can theſe be, but either his *real* or *profeſſing* people? And whether the one or the other be intended, it follows,

2. THAT their *children* ſhall *continue.* But in what reſpect ſhall the children of chriſtians CONTINUE? Does it refer to the *continuation* of the *human race* thro' their inſtrumentality? Is *this* the full import of the ſacred text, that chriſtians ſhould not be ſurpaſſed by *infidels*, but ſhould be fruitful and multiply, and repleniſh the earth, *as well as they?* We cannot ſuppoſe that ſo low and jejune a meaning is worthy of the pen of inſpiration. It therefore remains, that the prophetick promiſe refers to the religious privileges of the children of chriſtians, and imports — that they ſhould *continue (Jiſhconu)* dwell, abide, or tarry in the viſible church of God, as they were wont to do, along with their parents in every other œconomy of grace that ever was. To this is added,

3. THAT *their ſeed* ſhall be *eſtabliſhed.* It is hardly

hardly neceſſary to obſerve here, that by *ſeed* is meant *offspring* as ſuch, without excluding the youngeſt infant. And whether the pronoun *their*, relates to the antecedents *ſervants* or *children*, is immaterial, (tho' the connection ſeems to refer it to the latter,) it ſtill follows that the offspring — yes, the *infant* offspring — of chriſtians are to be *eſtabliſhed before* the Meſſiah. In what ſenſe *eſtabliſhed?* and how *before* the Lord Chriſt? It cannot mean that the ſeed of believers ſhould be eſtabliſhed in the *grace* of the covenant. We conclude then that the purport of the words is, —that the offspring of chriſtians were intended by the ſpirit of prophecy to be *eſtabliſhed*, confirmed, unmoved from and ſettled in their former ſtanding *before the Lord* in his church.

SHOULD any contend for this general meaning, that the chriſtian church ſhould be a kingdom in perpetuity, to continue for ever as what cannot be moved, it will not alter the caſe; for the words clearly point out the *manner* and *means* whereby this is effected, viz. by the children of profeſſors, and their ſeed being continued and eſtabliſhed in the church.

§ 35. THE next paſſage I ſhall advert to is Iſaiah lxv. 23. *They ſhall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: for they are* THE SEED *of the bleſſed of the Lord, and* THEIR OFFSPRING WITH THEM. Hence obſerve,

1. THAT the prediction refers evidently to *goſpel* times, and the accompliſhment muſt be ſought among *Chriſtians*. For tho' it were maintained, that the ſpirit of prophecy here eyed the

Jews in their glorious reſtoration to church privileges after the fulneſs of the Gentiles was brought in, *that* can make no manner of difference; for the Jews when *called* will be CHRISTIANS as well as the called Gentiles. The *middle wall of partition*, which cauſed the celebrated diſtribution of the human race into Jews and Gentiles, has been taken down. And it is obvious that what the Gentiles now *do enjoy* by right of evangelical privileges, is the *very ſame* as what the Jews *would have enjoyed*, if wrath had not come upon them to the uttermoſt, to their un-churching and diſperſion. The removal of the ſeparating wall evidently implies an intended incorporation, and a community of privileges. And it is equally plain, that what they *would have enjoyed* if they had then received the Meſſiah, was the ſame as what they *ſhall enjoy* on their future reception of him. Therefore, whether the converted Gentiles or Jews be intended in the words, they are CHRISTIANS, or ſubjects of the *laſt* and unalterable œconomy of mercy.

2. WHATEVER honours and privileges belong to THE SEED *of the bleſſed of the Lord* (and whoever be intended thereby) their OFFSPRING are pronounced *bleſſed* WITH THEM, co-participants of the ſame benefits. But all religious benefits being either *internal* and real, or *external* and relative; and the *former* bleſſings do not devolve on the children, as *their* children, (which needs not to be formally proved to Antipœdobaptiſts;) it follows—that theſe privileges, of which

which the *offspring* of christians are co-participants *with their parents*, are the external and œconomical benefits of the christian church. And if *baptism* be a *benefit*, as it demonstrably is to all capable subjects, and it is equally demonstrable that infants are such, it irrefragably follows that, according to the language and design of prophecy, the infant children ot christians are entitled to baptism with their parents. On the whole, the *connection* between parents and children, relative to church privileges and sacred ordinances, so reasonable and conformable to the law of nature in itself, and so countenanced by the sanction of Heaven, is here ratified and confirmed.

§ 36. (4.) THAT it is the WILL OF CHRIST we should introduce our infant children into the christian church, by the initiatory ordinance of baptism, will further appear from the corroborating evidence afforded in the NEW TESTAMENT.

BUT, previous to our investigation of particular passages, it is necessary to repeat a remark before made—that the TRANSITION from one dispensation to another, is *of itself* no adequate reason for abrogating any benefit or custom appertaining to the former, which would be really a benefit under the latter. Hence we find, (conformably to that wise and benevolent apophthegm, Mark ii. 21, 22.) that the change from the Jewish to the Christian œconomy, was *gradual* and most tender. Nothing was altered without a manifest necessity, and that always for the *better*. Our Lord and his apostles, being native Jews, not only were observant

ſervant of the *religious* worſhip and ceremonies of the Jewiſh church, but alſo complied with their innocent *civil cuſtoms*. It is beyond all reaſonable doubt, that *baptiſm*, as a purifying rite, and the holy *ſupper*, as a ſolemn Jewiſh feſtival, were in uſe before their appointment as ſtanding ordinances in the church*. The Apoſtle Paul aſſures us (Heb. ix. 10.) there were *before* Chriſt *divers baptiſms*. Therefore the baptiſm of the New Teſtament has nothing new but its appointment to the *particular purpoſe* of proſelyting into the Meſſiah's viſible and univerſal church. And this is perfectly conformable to the divine proceedings in former periods; as might be inſtanced in the appointment of the *rainbow* as a token and ſeal of the covenant, the Moſaic inſtitution of *ſacrifices*, &c.

THESE things duly conſidered, it muſt be a weak prejudice, a falſe notion taken upon truſt, unſupported by one ſolid principle, That there is any thing in the *mere change* of a diſpenſation, which implies an abolition of former *privileges*, and a promiſcuous annihilation of *every part* of church relations and connections. The *ſubſtance* of true religion is the ſame in all periods; and to ſuppoſe otherwiſe, would be as ridiculous as to ſuppoſe that whenever a man changes his *clothes*, his *body too* is metamorphoſed! The ſpiritual and moral parts of religion are the ſame now as ever; and tho' the goſpel preſents to us new *objects*, or

* See, among others, the following authors on this head: WITSIUS's Oecon. B. iv. chap. xvi. § 2. alſo § 3—10. GODWYN's Moſes and Aaron, Lib. iii. chap. ii. HAMMOND's Letter, Q. iv. § 5. GROTIUS in Matth. iii. 6. xxvi. 26—30. xxviii. 18.

or rather the same objects in a clearer light, yet the *principles* of true piety, *faith*, *love*, &c. continue invariably the same in every age. Again: duties of *natural obligation* are no more superseded by any change of dispensation in the church, than the principles of common sense are superseded by true philosophy. Whatever, therefore, appears of natural obligation, and meets with no revealed *positive* interruption, flows on uniformly and quite unaffected by a mere change of œconomy.

Of this *invariable* nature, we insist, is the obligation of parents to *benefit* their children by introducing them to a participation of their *own* privileges, even *all* those of which they are suitable subjects, be these privileges what they may: for, properly speaking, their *nature* does not constitute the *criterion* whereby we judge of the obligation, but the *capacity* and *suitableness* of the subject. It has been, I think, demonstrated, that baptism is an ordinance of which infants are not less capable than their parents, that they possess all necessary suitableness and qualifications to answer its nature and design; and therefore that the obligation of parents to baptize them is absolute and strong. This being the case, nothing short of a divine *express warrant* should influence any christian parent to the contrary. But scripture is so far from affording any such evidence, that it abounds with corroborating proofs to the contrary. We have appealed to every successive dispensation of revealed religion, we have appealed to the language of prophecy relative to gospel times, whereby the original thesis acquired additional confirmation;

firmation; and now we chearfully appeal to the New Teſtament records.

§ 37. JOHN the Baptiſt, or the Baptizer, makes his appearance as a Jew among the Jews; in ſpirit, aſpect and manners, another Elijah. But *whom* does he *baptize? Who* were the ſubjects of his extraordinary *purification?* "Jeruſalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." Matt. iii. 5—7. "All the people that heard him, except the Phariſees and Lawyers." Luke vii. 29, 30.—The whole account of the ſubjects of his baptiſm is but ſhort and general, as may be ſeen at one view, Chap. ii. § 2, &c. On which I remark,

TOWARDS an accurate and judicious interpretation of this conciſe account, in reference to the *particulars* of our preſent inquiry, it is neceſſary to keep a ſteady eye upon the proper and allowable *data* for that purpoſe. The Antipœdobaptiſts lay *this* down as a general rule—"If the ſcripture be *ſilent* about infants as the ſubject of baptiſm, or even not *deciſively expreſs* in their favour, we are to take it for *granted*, that they were *not* baptized." To face this cannon, however formidable, we venture to plant another—"If the ſcripture be ſilent about infants as the ſubjects of baptiſm, or even not deciſively expreſs *againſt them*, we are to take it for *granted*, that they WERE baptized with their parents." The general reaſon of this rule has been already produced repeatedly; but with regard to its propriety and juſt application

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tion in the case before us, let the following things be observed:

1. If John's baptism was *beneficial* to the parents, *as a divine institution*, and their children were equally *capable* of being the subjects of it with themselves, (which our opponents in fact allow, by promising to accede to our practice on the evidence of a clear precept or example, which they could not promise to do on supposition of absolute incapability); there appears some reason and propriety *for* Pœdobaptism, and nothing against it.

2. If we consider the constitution, the genius, the state and circumstances of that church of which John lived and died a member, and the persons who were the subjects of his baptism, we may safely conclude—that infants *were* partakers of the cleansing rite with their parents.

John was a *Jew*, and so were those, *all* those, he baptized; nor did they cease to be members of the Jewish church on account of his baptism. Their minds were indeed raised and directed to Christ, as one who would baptize them with the Holy Ghost; but *that* did not change their church relation, any more than the believing lively views and longing expectations of the patriarchs, prophets and other saints, in reference to the future kingdom of the Messiah, did change *their* church state.

Now what was the *nature* of that *rite* of which John was the appointed administrator? I answer, It was a Jewish cleansing, or ceremonial purification. In proof of which assertion, (omitting numerous respectable authorities that might be produced

produced, sufficient at least to exculpate from the charge of novelty) let this consideration be duly attended to — That, independent on the testimonies of the Jewish doctors concerning proselyte baptism, since we are certified by the pen of inspiration, (Heb. ix. 10.) there were *divers* BAPTISMS in use among the Jews, we *ought not* to consider John's baptizations as any other than these Jewish purifications and cleansings, any further than we are *necessitated* to do so from the New Testament records. It is therefore incumbent on those who hold that this rite was of a *different* nature, to shew clearly wherein the *difference* consisted, or else be content with the censure due to those who adopt an hypothesis without proof. Convinced, however, that these divine records favour no such discrimination as the abettors of that hypothesis contend for, we conclude that John's baptism was one of the *divers* BAPTISMS, before mentioned*.

IT

* I am not a little surprised at Dr. GILL's remarks on John's baptism (Body of Div. Vol. iii. B. iii. Ch. i.) where he attempts to prove that water-baptism is *peculiar* to the gospel dispensation. "This is opposed," says he, "to the sentiments of such "who say baptism was in use before the times of *John*, of Christ "and his apostles.—There were indeed divers washings, bathings, "or BAPTISMS, under the legal dispensation, for the purification "of persons and things unclean, by the ceremonial law; which "had a doctrine in them, called the *doctrine of baptisms*, which "taught the cleansing of sin by *the blood of Christ*; but there was "nothing similar in them to the ordinance of water-baptism, BUT "IMMERSION ONLY!" How the Dr. takes for granted, without proof or apology, that the passage referred to (Heb. ix. 10.) signifies *divers* IMMERSIONS! a passage his opponents have always pleaded as decisive *against* him! *Nothing similar to water*-BAPTISM *but* IMMERSION. That is, on his principle, which maintains that

Βαπτισμος

It is plain the expreſs *deſign* of it was to *prepare the way* of the Lord. For, as Moſes was commiſſioned *to* SANCTIFY *the people*, i. e. to prepare them by a ceremonial purification in expectation of an approaching new œconomy (Ex. xix. 10, 14.); in like manner, John was ſent to the ſame honoured family, the houſe of Iſrael, not only to proclaim to them that *the kingdom of heaven*, that is, a new and more excellent œconomy, was at hand, but alſo to ſecond the important meſſage by a general purification‖.

But, the queſtion now returns, what was the conſtitution of the Jewiſh church as to *infants?* The reply need be but ſhort to ſo plain a caſe: Infants ſhared in the *ſame rites* with their parents, even all thoſe of which they were capable ſubjects, were not particularly diſtinguiſhed and excepted. Not more ſure is it, that children oft, particularly *infant* children, were unavoidably ſubjected to ceremonial *pollutions* with their parents than they were entitled to the *ſame cleanſings*. Therefore, whatever was the nature of John's cleanſing rite, we may ſecurely infer — parents and children partook of it in common.

3. When

Βαπτισμος is *immerſion* — there was nothing in thoſe *divers immerſions*, ſimilar to the ordinance of *water-immerſion*, but *immerſion* only!! To ſuch ridiculous inconſiſtencies is that hypotheſis reducible which makes the biblical uſe of the words baptiſm and immerſion convertible and ſynonymous! He proceeds: "John was the *firſt* adminiſtrator of the ordinance of baptiſm."—This is flatly contradictory to the Dr's. conceſſion immediately foregoing — "that there were divers *baptiſms* under the legal diſpenſation," and conſequently *baptizers*.

‖ Vid. Grotius in Matth. iii. 6.

3. When we consider, in connection with these things, the general and *universal terms* made use of in the narration, we are rather confirmed than otherwise in favour of Pœdobaptism, as practised by the venerable son of Zacharias. When we read of, *all the people—the multitude—all that heard him*, and the like, in reference to an ordinance in which infants and young children were capable of sharing as well as adults; by what equitable rule, I would fain know, are we authorized to set up an excluding barrier? If because *infants* and children are not *mentioned* particularly, by the same rule we must exclude *women* from the privilege of John's baptism. But if the *silence* of the inspired narrative is no sufficient reason for excluding the *latter*, neither is it for excluding the *former*. The very use of *general terms* is sufficient evidence *(cæt. par.)* for including all the species to which they are applicable.

§ 38. But here I am aware of an objection that may be thought unanswerable against the above reasoning, viz. "That those who were baptized by John *confessed their sins*, which infants could not do." To this irrefragable argument, falsely so called, we shall oppose the following answers.

1. In all equitable and fair construction, nothing more can be inferred from such passages as speak of "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, being baptized of John in Jordan, *confessing their sins*," (Matt. iii. 5, 6.) than that *such* of them as were *actual* sinners made a *general* confession of their sins and iniquities; where-

as,

as, to serve the antipœdobaptist cause, the narration should support a proof widely different, viz. That John baptized *no others* but those who made a *personal* confession of their sins. But this, which alone would be available to our opponents, the history of John's baptism I believe will *not* support.

WHAT better clue can we fix upon towards investigating this point, than those scripture passages which treat of national and general *confessions of sin?* Thus, for instance, the Lord himself says with respect to Israel, Lev. xxvi. 40—42. *If they shall* CONFESS THEIR INIQUITY, *and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked against me—if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant—and I will remember the land.* Thus also Solomon, in his excellent prayer, on that memorable and eminently solemn occasion of introducing the ark of God into the new erected temple, 1 Kings, viii. 47—53. *If they shall bethink themselves—and* REPENT, *and make supplication unto thee—saying,* WE HAVE SINNED, AND HAVE DONE PERVERSELY, WE HAVE COMMITTED WICKEDNESS; *and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul—then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause—and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them; for they be thy people and thine inheritance, &c.* In like manner, on another solemn

lemn occaſion, when a national reformation was attempted, and a general faſt obſerved, it is ſaid, Neh. ix. 2. *The ſeed of Iſrael ſeparated themſelves from all ſtrangers, and ſtood and* CONFESSED THEIR SINS, *and the iniquities of their fathers.*

FROM theſe and ſimilar paſſages we may obſerve, (1) That the PEOPLE IN GENERAL, or *as a body*, are ſaid to *confeſs their iniquity*, to *repent*, and to ſay, *We have ſinned*, &c. (2) That notwithſtanding, *infants* were *not capable* of theſe acts. But, (3) Nevertheleſs, there was no privilege, national or eccleſiaſtical, which an infant was capable of enjoying, but was participated by the child as well as the parent, as connected with, or conſequent upon, ſuch as repentance and confeſſion of ſin. And (4) We may note the *general form* of confeſſion,—"We have ſinned, and have done perverſely, we have committed wickedneſs."—How parallel this account is with the repentance and confeſſion of, "Jeruſalem and all Judea," let the impartial reader judge. Let him reflect, particularly, that repentance and confeſſion of ſin were the preſcribed *conditions* in *both* caſes, and the *benefits* ſuſpended on theſe conditions were, in the one caſe, God's remembering his covenant, and the land—maintaining their cauſe, and giving them compaſſion before their enemies;—and, in the other, the *bleſſing* (not the *duty*) of the eccleſiaſtical purifying rite, and whatever external privileges were connected with it.

AGAIN: it is not ſuppoſeable that "Jeruſalem and

and all Judea," were *deemed* by John *true penitents*; and the sequel of the history shews abundantly they were not *in fact*. *All*, who did not *reject the counsel of God against themselves*, (Mark i. 5. Luke vii. 30.) were baptized of him; ALL the people but the *Pharisees* and *lawyers*. Therefore, seeing the repentance, humiliation and confession were of the *general nature* above described, there is no sufficient reason assignable why the infants and children *should* not, or *did* not, share with their parents in the baptismal *benefit*, as the consequence of those conditions.—It would be easy to make the same remarks on the humiliation of the Ninevites; when Jonah cried in the city, as John did in the wilderness, that destruction and wrath awaited the impenitent, the effect was pretty much alike; a *general humiliation* ensued, and we are sure that in the *one* instance, *infants* shared in the parent's consequent privilege; therefore, since that participation was not founded on a *positive grant* but the *law of nature*, we are constrained to conclude —that the parent's privilege, in the *other* instance, extended to his infants, and dependent family, in virtue of the same uniform law. Besides,

2. WHEN we consider how little notice is taken of children in the subsequent history of the christian church, particularly that part of it which treats of the progress and success of the gospel, and the evangelizing of nations, as well as in the sacred records of the Old Testament; where yet from

from circumſtances we may gather with certainty the avowed church-membership and baptiſm of infants; it is very conceiveable how the New Teſtament ſhould leave this point as we find it. The ſame remark is applicable to moſt reformations in the church, and revolutions in civil ſociety, while the membership and privileges of infants in theſe caſes ſtand confeſſed in the eſtimation of their reſpective hiſtorians.

CONSIDERING, therefore, theſe things — that the ordinance *in itſelf* does not exclude infant ſubjects, but admits them not leſs than adults, as before proved; — that the conſtitution, genius, and uniform cuſtom of the Jewiſh church (of which John and his diſciples were members) included infants with their parents; — that there appears in the brief account of John's miniſtry nothing *againſt* infants, but the *general* terms uſed are rather *in favour* of them; — and that nothing can be gathered, in fairneſs and equity, of objectionable weight, from the account of the people *confeſſing their ſins* as a conditional qualification for enjoying the baptiſmal privilege; for, on ſuppoſition that infants *were baptized*, no *other* language could be reaſonably expected, as further appears from the Old Teſtament and the moſt approved eccleſiaſtical and civil records — we conclude, That John was a PÆDOBAPTIST *de jure*, THEREFORE, (*cæt. par.*) that we ought to regard him ſuch *de facto*.

§ 39. WE next appeal to Chriſt's public miniſtry. Our Lord and his ſervants, we are expreſsly told,

told, made and baptized *more* disciples than John, tho' the latter baptized so great a number. How numerous then must they be! But were they *all* considered as *true believers*, or *real converts*, that is, justified and sanctified persons? Did our Lord, by his ministers, baptize the innumerable multitudes on *that supposition?* Nothing less. All that can in reason be thought of them is, that they made a general surrender of themselves as families and assembled crowds, after the manner of John's followers; and indeed, their so general defection from Christ on occasion of his searching discourses, and his approaching death, renders the fact indubitable.

We may here again observe, that *the same reason* remains in force, in behalf of the privileges of children, in this period as before; as there is no ground of *repeal*, we think, either expressed or implied. But tho' we have nothing *against* them, we have something *in favour* of them. What I shall insist upon from this part of scripture evidence, shall be confined to two things —our Lord's confirming and decisive *sentence* concerning the *church privileges* of infants — and the same thing *implied* in what he says of certain towns and cities as a general body, thro' the whole course of his ministry.

Let us begin with that passage Mat. xix. 13 —15. recorded also, with some variation, Mark x. 13—16. and Luke xviii. 15—17. Instead of transcribing these passages at length severally, as every reader may easily consult them, I shall give

them in one connected view from the *harmony* of the ingenious and candid Dr. DODDRIDGE. "And they brought infants and young children "to him, that he ſhould touch them, or put "his hands on them, and pray; and when his "diſciples ſaw it, they rebuked thoſe that brought "them. But when Jeſus ſaw it, he was much "diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto them, Suffer the little "children to come unto me, and forbid them "not; for of ſuch is the kingdom of God. Verily "I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the "kingdom of God as a little child, he ſhall in "no wiſe enter therein. And he called them "unto him, and took them up in his arms, "and put his hands upon them, and bleſſed "them; and departed thence †."—Jeſus was now, it ſeems, at *Bethabara*, which was beyond *Jordan*, over againſt *Jericho*, where he tarried with his diſciples ſome months. Hither great multitudes reſorted to him to receive his inſtructions, ſpiritual bleſſings, and miraculous cures. During his abode at *Bethabara*, previous to his going to *Bethany*, theſe things are recorded particularly,—the doctrine of divorce and matrimony, in anſwer to the tempting Phariſees—his doctrine concerning infants and children, occaſioned by the importunity of their friends and the *harſh imprudence*, or the *inconſiderate officiouſneſs* of the diſciples—the danger of riches, occaſioned by the queſtion of the young ruler—bigotry and a party ſpirit, a very prevailing ſin of the Jewiſh nation,

† Fam. Expoſ. vol. ii. Sect. 136.

nation, reproved in the parable of the labourers. —This, I believe, is all we have recorded belonging to this period, tho' of several months continuance.

Now, let us attend to the circumstances and import of that passage relating to infants and young children, as above. On which I would offer the following reflections; which shall relate to — the children's friends — the disciples — and our Lord's doctrine on the occasion.

§ 40. 1. THE most probable motives of the children's parents or friends seem to be, that the fame of Jesus being abroad about his condescension to children and his peculiar fondness for them, as is manifest from Mat. xviii. 2, &c. they were anxious of receiving some token of his condescending notice, and important benediction. In the instance just referred to, Jesus while at *Capernaum*, had called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of his disciples, taking him up in his arms and telling them — that they must become *like* little children — that kindness shewn to such, was like shewing it to *himself*. And, indeed, when we consider the propriety and amiableness of the thing itself, in connection with the character of Jesus, we should think too contractedly to imagine, that the few instances recorded by the Evangelists, were the *only* ones wherein he manifested a gracious regard for them. These considerations fully justified the *motives* of the persons in question whether *they* or the *children* were baptized

not, by John or any of Chriſt's diſciples heretofore, and without ſuppoſing them to have any deſign of offering themſelves or theirs to be baptized at this time; and indeed, this is the more improbable, in that, moſt likely, they had certain appointed opportunities for that purpoſe, whereas their expreſs deſign, as here recorded, was to receive his *benediction*.

2. THE next inquiry is, What could induce the diſciples to *rebuke* theſe perſons? I readily agree with Dr. S. That it is not probable their conduct is chargeable with the guilt of DESPISING LITTLE CHILDREN *as ſuch*, "having a far "better opinion of thoſe men of God, than "to ſuppoſe them capable of an evil, which "very few of the moſt profligate among man-"kind are chargeable with;" but is rather imputable to "their *imprudence* and *inconſidera-*"*tion*, than to any inhumanity or cruelty in "their tempers*." In fact, it ſeems to me pretty evident, that what gave *offence* to the diſciples was, what might appear to them an UNSEASONABLE *importunity*. Every one knows how much depends upon *well timing* an application to perſons of much buſineſs of an important nature. This remark is ſufficient to ſhew the inconcluſiveneſs of Mr. B.'s reaſoning on this point: "Is it not ſtrange, unaccountably ſtrange, "that our Lord's moſt intimate friends ſhould "have been *offended* with the perſons who brought "thoſe children, if it had then been cuſtomary "to

* Anſwer to Dr. A. p. 58.

" to baptize infants †?" *Strange!* not at all; much leſs *unaccountably* ſtrange. If there be any force in the reaſoning it is this,—If our Lord's attendants had been Pœdobaptiſts, then no *ill-timed* application, no improper *manner* of applying, no *circumſtance* whatever, could have been a cauſe of *offence* to them. I would exclaim in my turn, and with how much greater propriety let the reader judge, " Is it not ſtrange, unac- " countably ſtrange," that my reſpectable opponent ſhould be ſo inattentive to logical concluſiveneſs, as to reſt an argument on ſuch a foundation! Suppoſe an opulent and generous perſon, diſtributing liberally to proper objects on convenient and ſeaſonable opportunities, were addreſſed by the medium of ſervants or attendants *unſeaſonably*; and upon theſe giving the importunate ſolicitors of his charity a *ſhort anſwer*, or perhaps a *reprimand*, it ſhould be divulged — The public is miſtaken in regard of the character of the perſon, as if generous and charitable, and particularly his attendants who are reported to be of the ſame diſpoſition with himſelf; for elſe " is it not ſtrange, unaccountably ſtrange," that the perſon's moſt intimate friends ſhould have been *offended* with thoſe ſolicitors of their maſter's bounty, and ſhould even have *rebuked* them, if it had been *cuſtomary* for him to relieve the diſtreſſed? Any one acquainted with the world, and the nature of important buſineſs, might well ſay, Did you apply at a

† Pœdob. Exam. p. 349.

convenient time, and in a *prudent* manner? Equally futile is the inference, that Chriſt and his diſciples were no Pœdobaptiſts, elſe the latter could not have been *offended* with the perſons who brought the children. — Beſides; Mr. B. ſeems to forget or conceal the circumſtance of our Lord's being *greatly diſpleaſed* with the diſciples for their conduct; which he would not have been, without any *ground* of blame. And I believe with Dr. S. that his diſpleaſure "was "expreſſed with the greater warmth, in order "the more deeply to impreſs the minds of "ſpectators with the exceeding great tenderneſs "he felt for little children. And I imagine it "was chiefly with a view to mark this diſtin-"guiſhing feature of benevolence in our Lord's "character, and to inſtruct us in the duty we "owe to our children, that the evangeliſts have "ſo particularly related this pleaſing ſtory †." While all attention, perhaps, to ſome heavenly doctrine, the diſciples inadvertently thought he ought not to be interrupted by *children*, by *infants* (Βρεφη) who are incapable of attending to and comprehending the divine lecture *. But he ſoon convinces them of what they ought to have had always freſh in mind — "what ex-"ceeding great tenderneſs he felt for little chil-"dren." But

3. WHAT

† p. 58.

* Apoſtoli rem minus dignam Chriſto putabant, contingendis pueris occupari. POLI Synops. in loc. "Si impoſitum ejus capiti "fuiſſet diadema, libenter nec ſine plauſu excepiſſent: quia propri-"um ejus munus nondum tenebant." CALV. in Matt. xix. 14.

3. WHAT was our Lord's doctrine on the occasion? *Suffer the little children to come unto me*, FOR *of such is the kingdom of heaven.* "Hunc "clypeum Anabaptistis non *temere* opponimus‡." This I venture to call a *decisive sentence* in favour of the *continued privilege* of the church-membership of infants under the gospel dispensation, and consequently their title to baptism; the evidence of which let us now investigate.

§ 41. From the passage under consideration we may learn,

1. "THAT these little children, being stiled "(τα βρεφη) *infants*, (Luke xviii. 15.) and taken "up in Christ's arms, (Mark x. 16.) were "children not yet come to the age of discretion: "for βρεφη, according to EUSTATHIUS and PHA-"VORINUS, is το αρτι γεγονος παιδιον, και τρεφομενος "απο τηθης — *a new born child, nourished from the* "*teat* *."

2. WHATEVER may be included in this blessing, *of such is the kingdom of heaven*, we are not to suppose it *confined* to those children, much less to adults. "I cannot approve of rendering τοιουτων, *such as resemble these*. It is the part of a faithful translator, not to *limit* the sense of the *original*, nor to *fix* what it leaves ambiguous ‖." And Mr. HENRY observes, that "the word ge-"nerally signifies not similitude, but *identity*; nor "can any one instance be found where it excludes

‡ CALVIN *in loc.* * WHITBY *in loc.*

‖ DODDR. Fam. Expos. vol. ii. Sect. 136.

" the perſon or thing mentioned ‡." " Horum " et ſimilium: puerorum ut ætate, ita et mori- " bus: non excludit pueros, a quibus facit ini- " tium, ſed includit adultos eis ſimiles; q. d. " Pueri, a me jam benedicti, jam nunc idonei " ſunt regno cœlorum: vos adulti qui diu mea " preſentia & benedictione fruimini, nondum ido- " nei eſtis, &, ut idonei fiatis, reddamini oportet " illis ſimiles quos contemnitis, a faſtu alieni, " &c. *" " Hac voce tam parvulos quam eorum " ſimiles comprehendit. Inſulſe enim Anabaptiſtæ " pueros excludunt, a quibus *initium* fieri debe- " bat †." And Dr. S. underſtands Τοιέτων, — " *of ſuch little children*, LITTLE CHILDREN IN " GENERAL §;" which I am by no means in- clined to diſpute.

YET afterwards he qualifies this univerſality thus: " All little children WHO DIE IN THEIR " INFANCY. And this," ſays he, " I take to " be our Lord's meaning, *Of ſuch*, of little chil- " dren PASSING OUT OF LIFE IN THEIR IN- " FANCY, *is the kingdom of heaven*. And con- " ſidering what prodigious numbers, out of all " kindreds, nations and tongues, are removed " hence at that early period, heaven may very " properly be ſaid, a great part of it, to conſiſt " of them." Yet our author adds, " There is " no way by which it can be credibly known, " which

‡ Treatiſe on Baptiſm, p. 104.

* MALDONAT. ex ORIG. HIERON. AUGUST. &c. et LUC. BRUGEN. ap. POLI Synopſ. in loc.

† CALV. *in loc.* § Anſwer to Dr. A. p. 61.

" which of them do poſſeſs ſuch title to the " kingdom of heaven, till they die ‖." Hence he concludes, that becauſe we cannot certainly or credibly know which of them ſhall *die* in their infancy—we are to regard NONE of them, while they live, as *ſubjects of the kingdom of heaven*; except we reſt our judgment " upon a preſump- " tion of their dying."

BUT what ſays Mr. B. on this head? " That " it is *lawful* for a parent, or a *miniſter*, to GIVE " UP INFANTS to God by ſolemn prayer, which " is a moral duty, we readily allow; and that " the conduct of Chriſt, on this occaſion, mani- " feſted his regard for *little children*, is beyond a " doubt; at the thought of which, we are ſo " far from being pained, that we rejoice. Yes, " it is a matter of joy; becauſe, in our view, it " wears a *ſmiling aſpect* on the *final ſtate* of ſuch " as *die* in their infancy; and that without " any reſtriction, in reference to *carnal deſcent*, " which limitation has the appearance of a Jewiſh " tenet †." Mr. JAMES RUTHERFORD is ſtill more explicit: " As I cautioned my hearers, in " like manner let me intreat my readers, not to " entertain the *leaſt ſuſpicion* that my ſentiments " are harſh and uncharitable, reſpecting the hap- " py ſtate of children who die in infancy; for " tho' my concluſions ſo peremptorily exclude " them from any part in the outward church " ſtate, and deny their right to every ordinance " thereof, yet I dare not affirm they are incapa-

‖ Ibid. p. 64. † Pædob. Exam. p. 350.

" ble of internal washing, or without a part in " eternal glory: For altho' I have not met with " *one word*, either in the Old or New Testa- " ment, from which the *final state* of those who " die in infancy can be *inferred*, yet where the " matter is so liable to *dispute* among men, and " the scriptures so *silent* about it, always choose " to take the *most charitable* side; on which " account, I am inclined to *believe* the salvation " of ALL who *die in infancy* *." After all, according to Mr. B. the conduct of Christ manifesting his condescending regard for little children, without baptizing them, makes nothing for infant baptism. " He who can fairly prove the " point, or make any advances towards it, from " such premises, must be a wonderful proficient " in the art of syllogizing †." On the contrary, we cannot help thinking, that " he who can " interpret these words, " suffer little children, " &c." to the denial of infants', *all* infants', church-membership and consequent right to baptism, is no mean proficient in the art of evading evidence. However, let us examine this matter a little more closely.

THESE authors unanimously agree, that the phrase, " of such," includes, " little children in " general

* Thoughts on Believers' Bapt. p. 15. See, also, GILLARD's *Probability of the future state of infants, who die in infancy, stated and considered.* The Author, who is an Antipædobaptist, says of his design: " The idea pursued in this Treatise is, the probability " that ALL who die in a state of infancy, are *elected* and there- " fore certainly saved." p. 9.

† Pædob. Exam. p. 351.

" general, without any reſtriction, in reference to " carnal deſcent." They alſo unite in ſuppoſing the ſalvation of ALL ſuch as *die in their infancy.*" Yet, if Mr. RUTHERFORD's opinion be admitted, — " that there is not *one word*, either " in the Old or New Teſtament, from which " the final ſtate of thoſe who die in infancy can " be INFERRED" — the above conceſſions (for ſo I may call them) come from Antipœdobaptiſts with a very ill grace. However, tho' I cannot admit of Mr. RUTHERFORD's premiſes, I can eaſily fall in with the general concluſion, for reaſons that need not be here produced, (See § 6.) But tho' our opponents be thus unanimous in allowing children, dying in their infancy, a place in the church *above*, they are not leſs ſo in denying them a place in the church *below*; for were they to grant them the *latter* privilege, their obligation to *baptize* them, as belonging to, or members of, the church of Chriſt, could not be diſputed. Here I would aſk our opponents,

§ 42. CAN they coolly and impartially believe, that thoſe very children whom Chriſt *actually bleſſed*, to the joy of their parents, and the inſtruction of his miniſtring ſervants, were NOT *members* of the goſpel church, in the ſame ſenſe as their parents or any other diſciples were, at leaſt AFTER this benediction*?

* " Certe non luſorium nec inane ſymbolum erat manuum im- " poſitio, nec fruſtra preces in aerem Chriſtus effudit; ſolenniter " autem offerre Deo non potuit quin puritate donaret. Quid " vero

As Jews, they were members of the church of God, as well as their parents. But when a Jew believed Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, and profeſſed attachment to him, was he required to *renounce* his former religion, in like manner as a heathen was required to renounce his? Or, was there any thing whatever required of a Jew, but to *believe* what Chriſt *taught*, and to *obſerve* what he *commanded?* But believing what he taught, and obſerving what he commanded, no way interfered with the continued and uninterrupted church-memberſhip of his children. Nay, his *own* church-memberſhip was not *changed* but *improved* by confeſſing Chriſt. Therefore, for ſuch a parent to treat his children as *diſpoſſeſſed* of their church-memberſhip, when he himſelf was not, and without any pretence of neceſſity from any thing which Chriſt taught or commanded, muſt be evidently unjuſtifiable. Conſequently, in proportion as theſe parents judged and acted agreeably to *truth*, they muſt have conducted themſelves towards their children, as *actual members* of the church of God.

But ſince it appears that not only the leſs inſtructed among the Jews, but our Lord's diſciples

" vero illis precatus eſt, niſi ut reciperentur *inter Dei filios?* " Unde ſequitur regenitos Spiritu fuiſſe in ſpem ſalutis. Ipſe " denique amplexus teſtis fuit cenſeri ipſos a Chriſto in *ſuo grege*. " Quod ſi donorum ſpiritualium quæ figurat baptiſmus, compotes " fuerunt, *externo ſigno* privari abſurdum eſt. Sacrilega vero au- " dacia eſt, abigere procul ab *ovili Chriſti* quos ipſe in *ſinu ſuo* " fovet, & quaſi extraneos clauſa janua rejicere quos prohiberi " non vult." Calv. in Matt. xix. 14.

ciples who constantly attended him, formed very wrong conceptions of the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, which they called *the kingdom of heaven*, (See Mat. xviii. 1—4.) what can be more natural than to consider our Lord's declaration in the text, as a direct answer to such a mistake? Why should we not, therefore, interpret, "the "kingdom of heaven," of the Messiah's kingdom? In the last mentioned text, the disciples, labouring under this common prejudice, inquire of their Lord, "Who should be greatest in *the* "*kingdom of heaven?*" His answer to their question was, by an action similar to that we are considering; and (except we suppose the answer *foreign* to the question) in the *former* instance, the requisition for membership in the gospel church, or for subjects in the Messiah's kingdom, was—*conformity* to a little child, which he proposed to them as a model; in the *latter*, he seems to cut off all occasion of the absurdity of *confining* his doctrine to the case of adults, whose excellency consisted in likeness to infants, to the exclusion of infants themselves. Therefore, the *kingdom of heaven*, i. e. the *gospel church*, is made up, as to the true character of its subjects, not only of those who are *like* little children, but of little children *themselves*. Not only such adults as *resemble* these, but *these*, and *such as these*, in the strictest sense, belong to my kingdom now about to be established.

To this Dr. S. objects: "That he means "the *world of glory*, and not his kingdom on "earth, appears plain to me from the words "immediately

" immediately following, as reported by Luke, " *Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God* " *as a little child, ſhall in no wiſe enter therein,* " that is, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the goſpel " with the ſimplicity and teachableneſs [*teach-* " *ableneſs!**] of a little child, he ſhall in no wiſe " enter into the world of glory — not ſurely he " ſhall in no wiſe enter into the viſible church, " for into that ſome of the vileſt hypocrites have " entered †." If this be a juſt account of the *pre-requiſites* for glory, what becomes of infants, who do not receive the goſpel at all? Our reſpectable author ſeems to forget, that ſimplicity and teachableneſs are not *univerſally neceſſary* for entrance into the kingdom of glory, which he muſt allow in granting the ſalvation of dying infants. Paſſing by this, let us attend to his main argument: " Not the viſible church, for into that ſome of " the vileſt hypocrites have entered." But if this proves any thing, I fear it will prove too much. On other occaſions we are told, " He that forſaketh not all to follow Chriſt, — and hateth not father and mother, &c. for his ſake, cannot be *his diſciple*, i. e. cannot be a *ſubject of his kingdom.*" But who ſees not that in ſuch paſſages we are to underſtand the term *diſciple*, not as implying mere *profeſſion*, but the *poſſeſſion* alſo of what is profeſſed? In like manner, *entering*

" * When Mr. —— makes their *docibleneſs* the thing intended by " Chriſt, he forgot that he judged them uncapable of being *diſciples*. " Why may not thoſe be *diſciples*, who are not only *docible*, but " *exemplary* for their teachableneſs?" BAXTER's Plain Script. Proof, p. 105.

† Anſwer to Dr. A. p. 65.

entering into the kingdom of heaven, or the church of Christ, is twofold; either into the *number* of subjects *externally*, or into the real *spiritual happiness* it exhibits. And in this view the impartial Dr. DODDRIDGE paraphrases the passage in question, Mark x. 15. and Luke xviii. 17. "*Whosoever shall not* be willing to *receive the kingdom* "*of God*, or the GOSPEL DISPENSATION and the "HAPPINESS IT PROMISES, *as a little child*, "divesting himself of those prejudices, and those "secular views which men contract in their riper "years—*he shall not in any wise*, or on any "terms, *enter into it*, be his genius ever so sub-"lime, or his circumstances in life ever so consi-"derable †." This I believe is a plain, natural and consistent interpretation of the text; and avoids *five* great inconveniences with which the other appears clogged.

(1) THE confined sense of the words, for which our opponents contend, referring them exclusively to the *world of glory*, labours under this inconvenience, viz. That then they are *not so direct* and full an answer to the reigning prejudice of the persons addressed, particularly the disciples, whose wrong views of the Messiah's kingdom are here, it seems, intentionally rectified. (See Matt. xviii. 1—4.)

(2) IT labours under another disadvantage, viz. It virtually renounces that well known scriptural distinction of a *twofold* entering into the kingdom of Christ; into its *external privileges*, and its *internal blessings*: as if these words, "Whosoever shall

† Family Expos. vol. ii. Sect. 136.

ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, ſhall in no wiſe enter therein," muſt *needs* refer either to a mere external relation to Chriſt and his people, or to heavenly glory. Whereas it is equally true, that the worldly minded miſer, or the ſelf-righteous phariſee, can not enter into the *happineſs* of the goſpel diſpenſation, as that they can not enter into *glory*.

(3) It ſeems to deny, that the *ſtate of grace* as well as the *ſtate of glory*, may be called the *kingdom of heaven*. Nothing is more evident, or more univerſally acknowledged, than that the goſpel diſpenſation, in its external aſpect, is ſo called. Nor is it much leſs evident, that the *ſpiritual œconomy* of the goſpel is ſo denominated in the following places. Matt. iii. 2. iv. 17. x. 7. xii. 28. xvi. 28. &c. &c.†

(4) It excludes theſe very infants from *preſent* intereſt in the bleſſing pronounced concerning them. Is it ſuppoſeable that they have no real privilege either confirmed or conferred? Was our Lord's laying his hands on them, and reproving his diſciples for their ſakes, expreſſive of no favour towards them, but a mere empty ſign? But if this wonderful condeſcenſion and loving regard to them was attended with any benefit to them, are we at liberty to fix on any which fancy dictates, to the excluſion of what the words plainly expreſs? *Of ſuch* is *the kingdom of heaven*. The benefit here pronounced on them, (if at all here included, which cannot reaſonably be denied, as

† For a large collection of ſuch paſſages, ſee Whitby on Matt. iii. 2.

as before ſhewn) was a *preſent* benefit, whether now conferred or only aſſerted and confirmed. And to deny this will be attended with another inconvenience, viz.

(5) IF they were at all included, it muſt either make the plaineſt language of the time preſent refer to time *future*; or, convert the declaration, "of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven," into a *prophecy* concerning their eternal ſtate—both which will be thought ſufficiently improbable; and the more ſo, when we reflect, that there is not the leaſt neceſſity of running into ſuch extremes.—I would again inquire,

§ 43. HAVE we any ground to ſuppoſe, that our Lord would have denied the privilege here expreſſed, to any *other* infants or little children, had they been brought to him? Was not his declaration, "of ſuch," abundantly encouraging on behalf of *any ſuch* that ſhould be brought to him? Or muſt we interpret what is expreſſed in terms ſo general, as excluſive of *all the infants and little children* in the world? Strange interpretation! For, then, what encouragement or even propriety can there be in the preceding gracious declaration, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not?" How could this be *founded* on the general doctrine, "Of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven? Or muſt we ſay, in compliance with our opponents' interpretation,—"Such as DIE in their infancy go to glory, THEREFORE let theſe which are ALIVE, and SUCH as theſe, be brought unto me!"

AGAIN

AGAIN: Seeing what was done to theſe children was not of a miraculous nature, have we any authority to aſſert, that parents *in the preſent day* are debarred from every privilege tantamount to this with reſpect to their children? Yet, on Antipœdobaptiſt principles, which deny their church-memberſhip and baptiſm, this is the caſe! For, according to them, we cannot conclude, that "theirs IS the kingdom of heaven," but on ſuppoſition of their *dying*. But our Lord's gracious mandate, "Suffer them, &c." was not *that they may* partake of the kingdom of heaven, but *becauſe* of theſe, and ſuch as theſe, IS the kingdom of heaven.

MOREOVER: How can parents bring their children to Chriſt, in the Antipœdobaptiſt ſenſe of bringing them, *becauſe* theirs IS the kingdom of heaven? Or were it further granted, that our Lord meant, heaven above was in a great meaſure peopled with ſuch infants, *therefore* theſe were welcome; will it not ſtill follow, that *ours* are welcome in the ſame ſenſe and for the ſame reaſon? And if *bringing them to him* be followed with no church privilege, if no poſſible diſpoſition or conduct of a parent be attended with preſent advantage, and if the children of heathens (as my opponents hold) be equally admitted to heaven with thoſe of believers, dying in their infancy,—what poſſible advantage can there be to our offſpring, or encouragement to ourſelves, from *theſe words* of our Lord?

ONCE more: if parents or miniſters may now lawfully

lawfully, in the language of Mr. B. "GIVE UP INFANTS TO GOD by ſolemn prayer," *becauſe* there *are* infants in glory, it ſtill follows — that we may lawfully *give up infants to the church* of God, becauſe there are ſuch in glory. For to hold, that they may be *given up* to God with the view of their obtaining the *grace* of the covenant, and yet debarred from the *means* of the covenant, without any perſonal forfeiture, is abſurd. Nor can it be maintained, with any ſhew of reaſon, that our Lord's words, "Suffer them to come, and forbid them not," are the ſame in meaning as — "Do not hinder parents to *pray* for their children;" for *this* neither the diſciples nor any other perſon who would permit a *parent* to pray at all, would once think to *forbid*.

BUT ſuppoſing, for argument ſake, ſo unnatural and forced an interpretation were allowed, which grounds the reproof of the diſciples, and the encouragement of parents to bring *living* infants to him, on the happineſs of the *dying*, and of *theirs* if they die while infants —— ſtill, I ſay, if I am not greatly miſtaken, we ought to regard infants as parts of the *viſible church*. For, if Mr. TOWGOOD's calculation be juſt, viz. That "from the exacteſt obſervations, it appears, that of thoſe who are born into the world, ſcarce a *third part* attain to the age of *one year* †:" nay, upon a more moderate calculation, if, inſtead of a "third part," we ſay *one half* attain to the age of *two years*: —— there is not a new born infant in the world, our opponents

† Baptiſm of Inf. Reaſon, Serv. p. 1.

opponents being judges, but of that it may be ſaid —— it *more probably* is an heir of glory than of woe. And, tho' the matter were not quite ſo clear, Mr. RUTHERFORD candidly obſerves, " we " ſhould always chooſe the *moſt charitable* ſide." Hence it follows, that tho' none were to be viſibly brought to Chriſt, or admitted to church-memberſhip, but thoſe whom we charitably judge to be heirs of glory, we ought, on the conceſſions of our opponents, to treat our new born infants as thoſe who are viſibly related to Chriſt, or church members. For a *probable* viſible relation to the kingdom of glory, includes a *certain* viſible relation to the church militant. If we have any charitable probable ground of judging—" the king-" dom of heaven belongs to ſuch, *much more* a " ſtanding as members in the viſible church: for " what is it to be a member of the church viſible, " but to be one that in ſeeming, or appearance, " or to the judgment of man, doth belong to " the inviſible church, or the kingdom of hea-" ven? For the church is but one, and the dif-" ference reſpective—Therefore, both viſible and " inviſible, both military and triumphant, are called " in ſcripture, The kingdom of heaven, or of God. " If a man be [but probably] *known*, or any ſort " of men, to belong to the church inviſible, then " they *viſibly* belong to it; and then they are viſible " members of the church. So that this proof " [founded on our opponents' conceſſions‖] is " more full for infants' church-memberſhip, than " if

‖ See § 41.

" if it had been ſaid, They may be viſible church " members: for it ſaith much more of them, " which *includeth* that *."

BESIDES: have our antagoniſts any thing more than *probability* to influence their determinations with reſpect to adults? *Infallibility*, we know, they diſclaim; and a *medium* between both, will not be pretended. Now if a viſible probability of relation to the kingdom of glory be, according to our Lord, a reaſon of a viſible acceſs to him; and if he ſays " of ſuch" (underſtanding thereby with our oppoſers, the *ſpecies* of infants dying in their infancy) " is the kingdom of heaven," or heavenly glory; it follows, that we have a *ſtronger reaſon* for concluding that any child whatever belongs to the viſible church, than any can have reſpecting any adult. In the latter we *may* be deceived, in the former we *cannot*. The premiſes duly weighed, we dare not heſitate to conclude, —that the balance evidently turns in favour of Pœdobaptiſm.

SHOULD any object, that to acknowledge the church-memberſhip of infants would not amount to a conceſſion to juſtify Pœdobaptiſm;—I anſwer, If baptiſm be the only regular way and manner of ſolemn admiſſion into the goſpel church (as the learned Mr. TOMBES allows†, and if I miſtake not the generality of Antipœdobaptiſts); it will be time enough to prove the certain *connection* between church-memberſhip and baptiſm, when our opponents enter their proteſt againſt it.

BEFORE

* See BAXTER's Plain Script. Proof. p. 105.

† Apology. p. 54. See BAXT. Plain Script. Proof. p. 24.

BEFORE I dismiss this branch of our subject, the length of which has been occasioned by the subtle evasions of our adversaries, I would present the reader with the following words of Mr. RICHARD BAXTER: "Doth Christ take them "[infants] in his *arms*, and would he have them "*all* put out of his *visible church?* Would he have "us receive them *in his name*, and yet not receive "them into his church, nor as his disciples? How "*can* infants be received in Christ's name, if they "belong not visibly to him and his church? Nay, "doth Christ account it a receiving of himself, "and shall I then refuse to receive them, or ac- "knowledge them, the subjects of his visible king- "dom?—For my part, seeing—Christ hath given "me so full a discovery of his will in this point, "I will boldly adventure to follow his rule, and "had rather answer him, upon his own encou- "ragement, for ADMITTING A HUNDRED IN- "FANTS into his church, than answer for KEEP- "ING OUT OF ONE ‖." "I desire any tender "conscienced christian, that is in doubt, whether "infants should be admitted members of the visible "church, and would fain know what is the plea- "sure of Christ in this thing, to—bethink himself, "Whether it be more likely that it will *please* "*Christ better* to bring, or solemnly admit, in- "fants into the church, or to shut them out? "And whether *these words* of Christ, so plain and "earnest, will not be a *better plea* at judgment for "our admitting infants, than any that ever they "[Antipœdobaptists] brought, will be to them "for

‖ Plain Script. Proof. p. 103.

" for refusing them*?" " I bless the Lord Jesus, " the King of the church, for having so great a " tenderness to the infants themselves, and so great " a care of the information of his church con- " cerning his will, as to speak it thus *plainly*, that " plain meaning men may well see his mind: " even as if he had therefore done this because " he foresaw, that in these latter days some would " arise that would *renew the disciples' mistake* in " this point†."

§ 44. HAVING, as proposed, (§ 31.) considered our Lord's confirming and decisive *sentence* concerning the church privileges of infants; we proceed to consider more briefly, the same thing *implied* in what he says of Israel and certain towns and cities, through the whole course of his ministry.

1. IT is well known, that the mission and ministry of Christ were primarily intended for the use of the Jews, Matt. xv. 24. with which coincides his commission to the seventy, Matt. x. 6. Now if our Lord by his ministry addressed *Israel* as a *body of people*, even as they were wont to be addressed by the former prophets; and the same was given, in commission to the seventy disciples, that they should " *go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, preaching, and saying, " the kingdom of heaven is at hand"—it follows, that their *national conversion* was proposed, and but for their unbelief, and general rejection of the Messiah, would

* Ibid. p. 106.

† Ibid. p. 107.—See also Dr. DODDRIDGE's excellent Improvement of the sacred story, Fam. Expos. Sect. 136.

would have been effected. Therefore, it was œconomically and miniſterially *intended* that the Jewiſh *infants* ſhould be among the converted, or ſubjects of the Meſſiah's kingdom. Conſequently, it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe, that thoſe who *did receive* him were not favoured in regard to their children, as they would have been on the general converſion of their countrymen, except obliged thereto by a revealed fact. But no ſuch revealed fact exiſts. Hence we conclude, that the infants and dependents of converted Jews were *de jure* members of the goſpel church, and, for aught appears to the contrary, *de facto* likewiſe.

2. The ſame thing is implied in our Lord's inſtructions to his diſciples Luke x. 5—15. They were inſtructed to direct their meſſage to *families* and *cities*; the family was bleſſed, proſelyted or *diſcipled* if the *ſon of peace* was there; and in proportion as a *city* gave reception to them and their meſſage, it was *diſcipled* in like manner. But if they and their meſſage were deſpiſed and rejected, an awful curſe was denounced. The threatened woe was levelled againſt the inhabitants of a place, *collectively*; in which the parents and children ſhared alike, at leaſt externally; which implies, that the contrary bleſſings would have been ſhared in common, on ſuppoſition of the parents receiving the goſpel. Now it appears, that what was required of theſe families and cities for the continuance and extenſion of their religious privileges, was their *not rejecting* the goſpel meſſage; but

but perſonally to *repent* and *believe* in ſuch a ſenſe as is peculiar to the regenerate, cannot be ſuppoſed to be that, and that alone, which entitled whole *families* and *cities* to diſcipleſhip and goſpel privileges.

3. WHAT our Lord ſays in his lamentation over Jeruſalem, Luke xiii. 34, 35. and chap. xix. 41—44. and Matt. xxiii. 37, 38. implies, that, had it not been for its ingratitude and unbelief, in that *general* ſenſe before mentioned, its religious privileges would have been continued, confirmed and enlarged, as well as its temporal calamities averted. "How often (ſays the compaſſionate Saviour) would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not?" Again, "He beheld the city, and wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt, (or Oh! that thou hadſt) known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes —— BECAUSE thou kneweſt not the time of thy viſitation." Is it not here *implied*, that the genuine tendency and expreſs deſign of our Lord's miniſtry complied with, would have prevented their awful doom? But what was that doom? Did it not include a diſſolution, not merely of their civil polity but of their *religious privileges* alſo? And did not theſe include the *church-membership* of their infant children, which we have ſeen was by no means *peculiar* to the moſaic diſpenſation, and therefore

would not have been abrogated with the moſaic ritual?

4. THE ſame concluſion is evidently inferable from Matt. xi. 20—24. where our Lord *upbraids* the cities wherein moſt of his mighty works were done, becauſe they *repented* not; and the kind of repentance that would have been available, for the purpoſe of admiſſion into the goſpel diſpenſation, is mentioned ver. 21. "a repenting in ſackcloth and aſhes;" in the ſame manner as Nineveh; (compare Matt. xii. 41.) From whence, and from the foregoing paſſages, we infer,—— That the whole tendency, and expreſs deſign, of our Lord's miniſtry and that of his diſciples, *implied*, that the church-memberſhip and religious privileges of parents were to be extended to their children under the goſpel. Conſequently, the Antipœdobaptiſt plan of evangelizing and diſcipling the *nations*, which admits none to the chriſtian church, in its more univerſal form, *but* on perſonal profeſſion of what is deemed ſaving faith and repentance, differs eſſentially from that of Chriſt through the whole courſe of his miniſtry.—Should it be ſaid, that we ought to diſtinguiſh between the averting of judgment from a people, and their partaking of religious privileges and rites; I anſwer, it is true theſe are *diſtinguiſhable*, but it is equally true, that no ſuch diſtinction can be of any real ſervice to the Antipœdobaptiſt cauſe. For, being *Jewiſh* towns and cities, families and people—the *mode* of their converſion is to be ſought from their *own*, hiſtor y

hiſtory, and the former revolutions that *had before* obtained in the church of God; except a different manner be *expreſsly* ſpecified. Whatever hypotheſis is erected in defiance of this fundamental rule, muſt be neceſſarily a *baſeleſs* fabrick. Or, we may as ſoon contrive an even balance poſſeſſed of the wonderful property of outweighing *ſomething* with *nothing!* as to contrive a rule for excluding infants from the church of the New Teſtament, without an *expreſs* injunction for ſo doing.

§ 45. In confirmation of our general argument, that it is the WILL OF CHRIST infants ſhould partake of all their parents' privileges, and conſequently that of baptiſm, we next appeal to that capital text, Matt. xxviii. 19. *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them*, and ſo on*. "The whole tenour of the ſucceeding

"books

* Mr. Booth ſays, this "is not a mere *alluſion* to baptiſm, nor an *incidental* uſe of the term,—but it is *the inſtitution* of that ordinance." But what *proof* does he offer in ſupport of this aſſertion? Why, "It is the firſt appointment of baptiſm for the uſe of the *Gentiles*;" and "Jeſus Chriſt, on this occaſion, expreſsly claims *all authority in heaven and on earth*." (Pœdob. Exam. p. 322.) But how can the fact of its being now firſt appointed *for the uſe of the Gentiles*, diſprove its being before appointed *for the uſe of the Jews?* With as great propriety may it be inferred, that becauſe in this commiſſion we have the firſt appointment of *preaching the goſpel* to the *Gentiles*, therefore the goſpel was not preached before to the Jews!—Did not the diſciples baptize *before* this period? And was not that done *by commiſſion* from Chriſt? Had he not *authority*, divine authority, to commiſſion? Or was it now his kingly office commenced?—"*He plainly appears as King of Zion, and Sovereign of the world.*" But will Mr. B. ſay, that he was not ſo *prior* to this period? If not, how does this ſhew that baptiſm was not before inſtituted?

" books of the New Teſtament ſhews, that Chriſt " deſigned by this commiſſion, that the goſpel ſhould " be preached to *all nations* without exception, not " only to the Jews, but to all the idolatrous " gentiles: but the *prejudices* of the Apoſtles led " them at firſt to *miſtake the ſenſe*, and to ima- " gine, that it referred only to their going to " preach the goſpel to the Jews among all nations, " or to thoſe who ſhould be willing to become " Jews*." It is, I believe, generally agreed, that by *all nations* (παντα τα εθνη) is intended, the Gentile world at large, together with the Jewiſh nation. They were no longer to *confine* their labours among the loſt ſheep of Iſrael. The middle wall of partition being taken down, their commiſſion is unlimited. The whole habitable globe is their dioceſe, in which they were to employ their extraordinary talents, and ſeraphic zeal, without any official ſuperiority.

In our inquiry into the *controverted* part of this important paſſage, it will be neceſſary to premiſe, what is properly the point contended for from theſe words? And this is the rather neceſſary, on account of the following remarkable declaration: " Could it be proved, that μαθητευσατε, ſometimes " conveys the idea of making diſciples, where " there is *no teaching*; and that βαπτιζοντες, is " occaſionally uſed for pouring or ſprinkling, where " there is *no immerſion*; yet the diſpute between " us and our brethren would not be decided: " becauſe this queſtion would ſtill remain for " diſcuſſion;

* Doddr. Fam. Expoſ. *in loc. Note.*

" diſcuſſion; Is making a diſciple *without in-*
" *ſtruction*, in the one caſe; and *pouring* or *ſprink-*
" *ling*, in the other; the NATURAL and PRI-
" MARY ſignification of thoſe Greek words*?"
In ſettling this point, if we wiſh not to confound, it will be neceſſary to diſtinguiſh.—*Still the diſpute would not be decided; becauſe of the* NATURAL and PRIMARY *ſignification.* Here let the following things be conſidered.

1. THERE is an important difference between a *primary* PHILOLOGICAL or ETYMOLOGICAL, and a *primary* LEGAL ſenſe of terms; founded on this ground—That terms acquire different acceptations according to the poſitions in which they ſtand. There is hardly any law, ſacred or civil, but may furniſh a confirmation of this neceſſary diſtinction †.

2. IT follows, that a term, in its primary *legal* ſenſe, *may* have one acceptation; while, in its primary *philological* ſenſe it occupies another. And this, we contend, is the caſe here, even on ſuppoſition—that μαθητευω (referring the *other* term to its proper place) ſignifies, in its primary

 philological

* Pædob. Exam. p. 322.

† " It muſt be obſerved, that in tranſlating, we are not to render
" *word* for *word*, but *ſenſe* for *ſenſe*, and that the moſt *literal verſions*
" are not always the moſt *faithful*. There is a great deal of differ-
" ence between the *letter* and the *literal ſenſe*. The *letter* is the
" *word* explained according to its *etymology*. The *literal ſenſe* is the
" *meaning* of the author, which is frequently quite different from
" the *grammatical* ſignification of the words." BEAUSOBRE and L'ENFANT's Introduction to the reading of the Holy Scriptures, a p. Bp. WATSON's Collect. of Theol. Tracts, Vol. iii. p. 103.

philological meaning, and in certain positions, what Mr. B. contends for.

3. NOTHING is capable of fixing the exact *legislative force* of a word or phrase, but a careful and impartial attention to circumstances; and these refer either to the Sovereign or the subject. For, if we overlook relations, time, place, customs, laws already in force, and the like, what success can be expected in ascertaining the sense?

4. THAT must needs be the most *natural* signification, which results from a due weighing of all circumstances. Should not the force and comparative influence of terms be sought in connection with the constitution and genius, and especially the former statutes of any state? And is not this rule equally applicable to that kingdom which is not of this world?

THESE things considered, then, may we not justly expostulate—How was it possible for the disciples,—who were native Jews, and brought up in the bosom of the Jewish church, receiving instructions from the Messiah who was alike circumstanced,—to understand the terms employed in this text, in any other sense than that which includes infants with their parents? Would they understand their commission in a sense to which they never had been accustomed? take words *capable* of *two* constructions in that sense which excluded infants from their parents' privileges? A sense, I will add, they never heard of; nay, that NEVER HAD BEEN HEARD OF SINCE THE WORID BEGAN? Or, had they been previously versed in our opponents' notions about positive

positive rites? These we have seen, and seen I think demonstrated, to be inconsistent with truth; and therefore, may boldly affirm, they were governed by no such maxims. Moreover; could they so easily forget, in the interpretation and execution of their commission, their Lord's repeated declarations, that "of infants was the kingdom of heaven?" Could they forget his being *greatly displeased* with them, for their not paying infants that attention which was their due, and to which culpable neglect their ambitious and erroneous views of the gospel kingdom had betrayed them? Had they not just reason ever after to fear adopting any sentiment or practice which would exclude infants from a visible access to their Divine Friend and Saviour; by whom their privileges, as visible church-members, had been so expressly asserted and confirmed? (See § 39—43.)

"ARE these the senses of those terms, says Mr. B. that would naturally *first* occur to the mind of a wise and impartial person, on reading or hearing this law of baptism?" and again; "each of these emphatical words, making a capital figure in the heavenly edict, should be understood in its *most plain*, and *common*, and *expressive signification*: for, as to any *absurdity* following upon it, our opponents pretend none, but what implies a begging of the question†." We answer, that in connection with all those circumstances of legal interpretation which *ought* to be taken into the account, the sense which includes infants with

† Pædob. Exam. p. 322.

their parents, in this phraſe ——μαθητευσατε παντα τα εθνη βαπτιζοντες αυτες——is not only the *firſt* that would occur to the mind of the diſciples, but we maintain that there is the "higheſt evidence" the Legiſlator did *intend* that ſenſe. Nay further, we inſiſt that it is "highly abſurd" to interpret them otherwiſe than what we contend for, and that without "begging of the queſtion diſputed." For, is it to "beg the queſtion," to take into the account the circumſtances of legiſlation? And were not the diſciples always accuſtomed, as Jews and as the diſciples of Jeſus, to reckon infants as members of the church with their parents, in every preceding diſpenſation? Beſides; on ſuppoſition that our Lord intended, in ſo many words, to eſtabliſh our ſenſe of the text, how could it be more properly expreſſed, or more effectually eſtabliſhed? And though deſigned for all ages and nations, that does not hinder their being adapted to the circumſtances of the perſons firſt addreſſed. Upon the moſt equitable ground, therefore, it would be *abſurd* to ſuppoſe the diſciples underſtood them of adults *only*. This being the caſe, nothing can be admiſſible in evidence againſt Pœdobaptiſt principles, from this or any other text, which does not reject and excommunicate infants in the moſt expreſs and unequivocal manner. I ſay *excommunicate*; for can it be any thing ſhort of this, when the whole *ſpecies* of infants is *cut off* from the church militant at one blow? Before we accede to ſuch a ſtep, is it not proper to pauſe—to pauſe again—

and

and to inquire with holy alarm;—On what ground are *they* excluded from the church on earth, who are confeſſedly admitted to glory, dying in their infant ſtate? The Jews were *cut off* for *unbelief*; but this is no adequate cauſe in the caſe of infants born in the city of God. Is the ſpecies of infants *more wicked* now, than before and after the deluge, that they ſhould be debarred from their parents' privileges? Where is the broad ſeal of heaven to ratify that abſolute authority which puts an end to all ſtrife? I muſt ingenuouſly confeſs, that, with all the *light* Mr. B. has thrown upon the point, I can diſcover no ſuch authority. But I ſee, or think I ſee, every part of the divine diſpenſations, and the whole of the ſacred oracles, perfectly conſiſtent with Pœdobaptiſm, and delivering a verdict not a little favourable to it.

§ 46. But Mr. B.'s moſt formidable objection, and that on which he ſeems to lay the principal ſtreſs, is ſtill behind. Its figure is that of a horned dilemma. "If this law of the "Lord have any regard to inſtruction, as a pre-"requiſite for baptiſm; that inſtruction muſt be "required, either of *all* or only of *ſome*. To "affirm the *latter*, there is not the leaſt ground "in this divine canon; becauſe it makes no diſ-"tinction between what is required of ſome, and "what is demanded of others.——It remains, "then, that *all* muſt be taught, that *all* muſt "become diſciples, before they are baptized*." This does not appear to me conſequential and ſolid, though ſubtil. I would, therefore, propoſe

* Ibid. p. 325.

what, to my apprehenſion, ſeems to be the preciſe meaning of our Lord in the text, viz. That goſpel miniſters ſhould *proſelyte*, *diſciple*, or *teach*, and *baptize* ALL PROPER SUBJECTS in all nations, introducing them thereby into the goſpel kingdom, and exerciſing their commiſſion diſcretionally, *pro captu ſingulorum et inſtantium rerum.* And not only do I think this to be the genuine intent of the commiſſion, but apprehend that, by fair criticiſm and argument, it is *impoſſible* to ſettle the meaning of the text, by any other interpretation †. For, if it be ſaid, that παντα τα εθνη muſt be taken *ſtrictly* and without any ſuch qualification—if μαθητευσατε be underſtood in that ſenſe of proſelyting which may be done *without inſtruction*, abſolutely and unconditionally—if we ſay that *all who are taught* may be baptized without diſtinction—they all lie equally expoſed to exception, uncertainty and error.

BUT

† "It ſeems to me (ſays the judicious Dr. GUYSE), that "μαθητευσατε παντα τα εθνη, *Diſciple all nations*, relates to "the WHOLE DESIGN of Chriſt's commiſſion for making diſci-"ples to him; and that βαπτιζοντες, and διδασκοντες αυτους, "*baptizing* and *teaching them*, are mentioned, as PARTICULAR "BRANCHES of that general deſign, the order of which was to be "determined by the *circumſtances of things*. And *theſe* indeed made "it neceſſary, that in diſcipling ADULT *Jews* and *Heathens*, they "ſhould be taught *before* they were baptized; but *other* circum-"ſtances, in the ſettled ſtate of the goſpel kingdom, make it *as* "*neceſſary*, that in diſcipling the children of believers [i. e. of "Chriſtians] they ſhould be *firſt baptized* and *afterwards taught*, "as the CHILDREN of Jews, and of proſelytes to their religion, "were *firſt circumciſed*, and when they grew up were inſtructed "in the faith of the God of *Iſrael*." Note *in loc.*

BUT here it is observable, that what Mr. B. cites as *concessions* from HOORNBECKIUS, RIDGELEY, CALVIN, POOLE, BECKMANUS, BARROW, MASTRICHT, BURNET, WHITBY, VENEMA, &c. who were professed Pædobaptists, should be understood in the sense just proposed; and what those passages fairly imply is—that it would be an abuse of the term μαθητευσατε to plead from it the mode of discipling which the church of Rome has sometimes adopted, to the disgrace of the christian religion. It is extremely improbable, nay highly uncharitable to suppose, that these eminent characters should be capable of so glaring a contradiction, as to hold any sense of the word μαθητευω incompatible with infant discipleship and baptism. However that be, my business is not to vindicate characters, but to investigate truth.—In fact, the text is capable of abuse in two opposite extremes: the one strains them into a sense *too general*; the other into a sense *too particular*, or unreasonably contracted. But if repentance and faith be required ONLY of adults, as conditions, *sine qua non*, of *salvation*; for the very same reason—teaching is required ONLY of adults, as a condition, *sine qua non*, of *baptism*. Here the hackneyed distinction between the different kinds of evidence required in moral duties and positive rites, is useless. For, is it not an act equally sovereign, to prescribe the conditions of salvation and the qualifications for baptism? And is not the *former* as much included in Mr. B.'s definition of positive absolute

authority as the *latter* can be? Beſides, are not theſe qualifications for ſalvation and baptiſm, reſpectively, delivered in the *ſame commiſſion?* It follows, therefore, inevitably, that if this commiſſion (ſee Mark xvi. 15, 16.) excludes infants from baptiſm, it muſt on the ſame principle exclude them from ſalvation and glory, contrary to our opponents' declarations. Nor will it ever be in their power, I ſcruple not to affirm it, to prove the greater probability of dying infants' ſalvation than their perdition, without at the ſame time furniſhing us with premiſes from which we may fairly conclude they may be baptized while living. For if it be ſaid, that their *ſalvation* may be gathered from *other* conſiderations; ſo may the duty of parents and miniſters to baptize them. But this I hope has been ſufficiently eſtabliſhed before.

"HERE one can hardly forbear to remark," ſays Mr. B. "in what *oppoſite* ways this capital text is interpreted, to make it agree with different hypotheſes †." True: And we claim the liberty, in turn, to claſs his interpretation among thoſe which are ſo *different* and *oppoſite*. Or can he ſuppoſe, that *his* hypotheſis muſt needs paſs for true, becauſe he finds a diſagreement among other authors? Were this mode of arguing admitted, with what eaſe might the Quakers confute the Pœdobaptiſts and Antipœdobaptiſts alike; the Papiſts our Proteſtant principles; and Deiſts our common chriſtianity!

§ 47. IT

† P. 332.

§ 47. It would be easy to produce a long list of eminent authors, ancient and modern, who render the word μαθητευειν, by TO PROSELYTE, TO DISCIPLE, or TO MAKE DISCIPLES, as well as by *to teach*. Let the few following suffice. Thus LEIGH, in his *Critica Sacra*: "μαθητευσατε, *Go and teach all nations*; or word for word from the Greek, GO MAKE THEM DISCIPLES, as it is expounded, John iv. 1." BULLINGER: "DISCIPULATE, sive, facite mihi discipulos†." DUTCH ANNOTATORS: "Instruct all the nations; or MAKE DISCIPLES among all nations, as the word is also taken, Acts xiv. 21. Mark xvi. 15." POOLE'S CONTINUATORS: "The Greek is, μαθητευσατε, MAKE DISCIPLES all nations." DODDRIDGE: "Go forth therefore and PROSELYTE all the nations of the earth‖." Turretine "Vox μαθητευειν, qua Christus utitur, proprie non tam est docere per predicationem quam DISCIPULOS FACERE, quod fit etiam administratione baptismi, qui est sacramentum initiationis, & primus in ecclesiam & familiam Christi introitus *." STOCKIUS: "Μαθητευω, FACIO DISCIPULUM. Proprie discipulatum innuit, & *transitive*, notans, DISCIPULUM FACERE §." BEZA: "μαθητευειν hic non neutropassive pro, *discipulum esse*, sed *active* accipitur; q. d. DISCIPULATE." GATAKER: "*Discipulos facite*." LIGHTFOOT: "Introducite per

† Crit. Sacr. ad verb. ‖ Fam. Expos. vol. ii. § 202.
* Instit. Theol. Loc. xix. Quest. xx. § 4.
§ Clav. Nov. Test. in voce.

per baptiſmum, ut doceantur. — Errant qui hinc colligunt, neceſſario docendos qui baptizandi ſunt. — Dixit ethnicus ad Hilelem, *proſelytum me fac, ut me doceas**." HAMMOND: "Mat. xxviii. 19. — The phraſe which is there uſed in the original is a ſingular one, not duly expreſſed by our engliſh, *teach*. It is μαθητευσατε, MAKE DISCIPLES, or *receive into diſcipleſhip*, all nations, baptizing them in the name, &c. making this form of baptiſm their ceremony of receiving them. — John iv. 1. μαθητας ποιει, και βαπτιζει, is all one with μαθητευσατε βαπτιζοντες. — Διδασκοντες, *teaching*, follows after βαπτιζοντες, *baptizing:* all that are thus brought and received *ad diſcipulatum*, to be for the future inſtructed, and inſtituted in the chriſtian faith, may ſurely be received in baptiſm, the ceremony which is there preſcribed by Chriſt, with which to receive diſciples †." WITSIUS: "Mat. xxviii. *Go ye, therefore, and* μαθητευσατε, DISCIPLE *all nations, baptizing them*, &c. There Chriſt commands that diſciples be gathered into his ſchool, and, as perſons in covenant with him, ſealed with the ſeal of baptiſm. But it is evident, that when parents become diſciples of Chriſt, their *children* likewiſe are reckoned in the number of *diſciples*. Juſt as among the Jews, together with the proſelyte parents their infants were initiated in the Jewiſh rites. It was needleſs therefore that Chriſt ſhould make expreſs mention of infants as the ſubjects of baptiſm ‖."

To

* PELT Synopſ. in loc. † Six Queries. Quer. iv. § 25.

‖ WITS. Oecon. Fœd. Lib. iv. cap. xvi. § 41.

To these respectable authorities many more might be added, were it necessary; in whom we find μαθητευω is expressive of such *discipleship* as includes infants and young children, no less than adults; and consequently, that previous teaching is by no means *essential* to discipleship. Therefore, the word must be a *general term*, which does not, nor is intended, to express the *specific mode* of discipling. The *manner* of executing the command depends, entirely depends, on the capacities and circumstances of the persons to be discipled. And this discretionary nature of the commission, well attended to, is the only preventive against abuses.

AGAIN; if infants and children cannot be *disciples*, they cannot be *christians*, for these terms are convertible, and used synonymously (Acts xi. 26.); and if not christians, they cannot belong to Christ; but there are many such, our opponents grant, who belong to Christ (see also Mark ix. 41.); therefore infants *may* be *disciples*, except it be said, they may be admitted to glory without belonging to Christ, which is absurd. And if so, they may be *disciples* without human teaching, in the New Testament sense of discipleship.

BESIDES; if παντα τα εθνη be the object of the command, μαθητευσατε; we insist that the rendering, DISCIPLE, is more *obvious* and *natural*, than the other, *teach*. For *discipling*, in the sense now explained, may naturally and strictly belong to *a nation*, to *all the nations*; but not teaching. Hence

Hence we further argue—if the *diſcipling* in the text be ſuch as *may* comprehend *a nation*, nay, *all the nations*, as it certainly is (except Chriſt commands an impoſſibility), then it is ſuch as *cannot* agree to that ſpecific mode of diſcipling which is effected by *teaching*, *excluſively*. For, on Antipœdobaptiſt principles, what tolerable propriety can there be in making *all nations* the objects of diſcipleſhip! According to them, the term *nation* muſt have a very ſingular acceptation indeed; for, in the firſt place, they muſt exclude from it *all infants* and young children; and, in the next place, they would exclude all adults, except the *few*, comparatively *very few*, who are deemed by them fit ſubjects of baptiſm. Well, when they have *taught* them, few as they may be, they muſt ſay—that the *nation!* is diſcipled. Does not ſuch an interpretation militate againſt the plain and natural uſe of terms, and bid defiance to the force of language? On our principles, it may be ſome time firſt before *a nation* be diſcipled; but on our opponents', no nation *ever can* be. How much more rational, and agreeable to the language of prophecy; and how much more worthy of the nature of the Meſſiah's viſible kingdom, the following words of the judicious and venerable TURRETINE? "μαθητας ποιειν non eſt ſimpliciter docere, ſed *diſcipulos facere*.—[Mat. xxviii. 19. Probatur Pœdobaptiſmus ex hoc mandato] ab antitheſi nam *omnes gentes* opponuntur omnibus & ſolis Judæis, ut poſtulat diſcrimen Veteris & Novi

Novi Teſtamenti. — Qui præcipit *omnes gentes* baptizari, is etiam præcipit baptizari *infantes*, præceptum enim de genere includit *omnes ſpecies*‡." To this let me add the following words of Biſhop BEVERIDGE: "Our Lord Chriſt, a little before his aſcenſion into heaven, left orders with his apoſtles, and in them with all that ſhould ſucceed in the miniſtry of the church to the end of the world, to make *all nations* his diſciples, *by baptizing* them in the name, &c. as the original words plainly import Mat. xxviii. 19. — It is to be further obſerved, that when our Saviour ordained baptiſm to be the way or means of admitting perſons into his church, or the congregation of his diſciples; leſt we ſhould think, as ſome have done, that he meant it only of thoſe who are of riper years, he uſed the *moſt* GENERAL TERMS *that could be invented*, requiring that *all nations* ſhould be baptized; and if *all nations*, then children alſo, which are a great, if not the greateſt part of every nation‖."

MOREOVER: There ſeems to me a peculiar propriety in our Lord's uſing terms of ſuch *general import*; for had it been inſtead of μαθήτευσατε any term which *excludes* teaching as a mode of diſcipling, what a handle muſt ignorant and cruel bigots make of it in ſubjecting nations to the chriſtian faith! Ambitious miſſionaries might then juſtify their cruelties with ſpecious arguments

‡ Inſtit. Theol. Loc. xix. Queſt. xx. § 4.

‖ Priv. Thoughts, Part ii. On Chriſtian Education, p. 6.

arguments, and abuſe their commiſſion by pretending to divine credentials. Would not *any other* term be liable to greater abuſes and ſtronger objections than that which is wiſely choſen? For inſtance, had διδασκω or παιδευω been adopted as terms *leſs general* to expreſs the pre-requiſition for baptiſm, it would have weakened what we apprehend our Lord meant to countenance, viz. our obligation to receive children together with their parents into the viſible church, by the initiatory rite of baptiſm. On the other hand, had μυειν or τελειν been ſubſtituted for μαθητευω, the ſame inconvenience would have followed. For tho' the two former, I preſume, might have conveyed the main idea contained in the latter (and accordingly ſome of the greek fathers ſeem to uſe them ſynonymouſly, ſee ISIDORE of *Pelluſium* Lib. ii. Ep. 37. &c.) yet they would have been on many accounts leſs eligible.

ONCE more: Why, we wiſh to know, muſt we put a conſtruction ſo unfavourable to infants (when no neceſſity requires it), upon every clauſe of the law which is deemed the rule of entrance into the church militant; while our opponents themſelves aſſume, and juſtly aſſume, the liberty of giving an *apparently oppoſite* conſtruction to that law which refers to their admiſſion to the church triumphant? "He that *believeth not* ſhall be damned." Nay, we may add, we have greater apparent reaſon, from this very commiſſion (Mark xvi. 15, 16.) for excluding infants from ſalvation, than from baptiſm. For

For we contend that it is a law of nature, that children ſhould partake of all the external rites and privileges of religion they are capable of, and therefore baptiſm, together with their parents; which cannot be ſaid of their ſalvation.

To conclude: If infants were deemed, and juſtly deemed, *proſelytes**; they may in like manner,

* Dr. STENNETT, indeed, ſeems to deny this, when he ſays, "Is it proper to ſay of perſons, that they may be *proſelyted* or diſciples without any previous inſtruction, conviction or perſuaſion?" (Anſ. to Dr. *A.* p. 133.) To this I reply,

1. If it was *cuſtomary* among the Jews to call thoſe who were tranſlated from Heatheniſm to the true religion, or the kingdom of God among them, GERIM, *foreigners* or *inmates*; and if it was *cuſtomary* for the Greeks to call theſe Προσελυτοι, *proſelytes*, απο του προσεληλυθεναι; and if it be FACT that *infants* were always reckoned, and by divine appointment, (Exod. x.i. 48, and Numb. xv. 14, 15.) among theſe *inmates* — We may well aſk, what *impropriety* is there in calling an infant a *proſelyte*?

2. It is an *inconteſtible fact* that the Jewiſh writers, ſpeak of *infants* and little children, as *proſelytes*. 'Tis not only the *Gemara*, but the text of the *Miſna* itſelf, both in the *Babylonian* and *Jeruſalem Talmud*, which ſpeaks of a *child* becoming or being made, *a proſelyte*. — And the *Gemara* ſpeaks expreſsly of "*a proſelyte in infancy*." And MAIMONIDES calls a little child or an *infant* "*a proſelyte*." (See Dr. WALL's Hiſtory of Infant Baptiſm; Introd. § 3, 4, with the Authors there referred to. This, Dr. GILL himſelf could not gainſay, and therefore gives it up. Body of Div. vol. iii. 486.

3. If a *proſelyte* be *advena*, a *ſtranger*, one come over from one place or relation to another, as the term imports; what impropriety is there in applying it to infants? When we ſay "*ſtrangers are come* to a place," is there any impropriety in our including *infants*, becauſe *theſe* are ſtrictly *brought*?

4. When our Lord ſays of *infants* (Matt. xix. 14.) "Suffer them, and forbid them not ελθειν προς με," is there not the ſtricteſt propriety in calling *infants* when brought, PROSELYTES?

ner, be deemed *diſciples:* for, (as a great critick obſerves) "a diſciple and a proſelyte being perfectly all one, ſave only that the latter denotes a *coming* from ſome *other nation* or country, which difference hath no place in this matter, where the diſciples are ſpecified to be received from *all nations*†." And if *diſciples*, they ought to be *baptized*; for the text in diſpute affords no ground of exception againſt any who are *diſciples*. "Nor ought that hoary maxim of legal interpretation to be haſtily caſt aſide;—*We* muſt not diſtinguiſh, where the *law* does not diſtinguiſh."—And ſhould it be objected, that infants are not *made* diſciples, and therefore ſhould not be baptized; we anſwer, if they *are* diſciples, they muſt be *conſtituted* ſuch; and whether that conſtitution be derived from a divine appointment in favour of the *ſpecies*, from a miniſterial act whereby they are proſelyted to the chriſtian religion (as heathen families were proſelyted to the Jewiſh religion) or from any other cauſe, is perfectly immaterial in the preſent argument.—As to the trite objection urged from the *order* of the words, "*teach*—*baptizing them*," I anſwer with Dr. ADDINGTON; "It is, in every view, indefenſible and ill-grounded. It is a *mere engliſh* criticiſm ‖." And with Dr. HAMMOND; "The phraſe which is there uſed in the *original*, is a ſingular one, not duly expreſſed by our Engliſh*." But, even in *our tranſlation*

† Dr. HAMMOND's Six Quer. Q. iv. § 27.

‖ Chriſtian Miniſter's Reaſ p. 112. * Ut ſupra, § 25.

tranſlation, there is no *conjunction* to denote a diverſity of acts: for it is not "*teach* AND *baptize*," but "*teach*, *baptizing them*." Hence the author laſt quoted ſays, "We know from that place of Mat. xxviii. that baptiſm is the ſolemn ceremony of receiving into Chriſt's ſchool the church ‖."

AND, indeed, were our oppoſers indulged with their favourite rendering, *teach*, they muſt either renounce their ſingular notion of *poſitive inſtitutions*, as utterly excluding all analogy and inferential reaſoning, or find themſelves involved in endleſs uncertainty; for on what authority can they deny baptiſm to *any* who are *taught?* And yet, how very unfit for baptiſm, our opponents being judges, are numbers who *are taught*, and who *profeſs* that Jeſus is the ſon of God and the only Saviour? But if "*we* muſt not diſtinguiſh where *this law* does not diſtinguiſh," what groſs abſurdities would follow? Not more oppoſite is the Antipædobaptiſt hypotheſis to the *truth*, than ſubverſive of *itſelf!*

§ 48. LET us next inquire, In what ſenſe the Apoſtles underſtood their commiſſion? And particularly, whether they did not underſtand it to include the diſcipleſhip and baptiſm of infants with their parents? But here it is neceſſary to preſcribe the limits of our inquiry. Now ſince the *poſitive part* of the evidence has been already eſtabliſhed, it would be ſufficient for us, in point of ſtrict argument, to act henceforth only on the *defenſive*

‖ Ibid. § 26.

defenſive; for until that part be diſproved (which, I preſume, will not be done in a hurry) the ſmalleſt probability will be a corroborating addition. We ſhall therefore attend, in the remaining part of this chapter, to what we apprehend to be, in connection with the premiſes, *additional* evidence; reſerving for another place an examination of thoſe paſſages in the apoſtolic writings, which are ſuppoſed by our oppoſers to be inimical to Pœdobaptiſm.

LET us begin with Acts ii. 39. For *The* PROMISE *is to you, and to your* CHILDREN, *and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God ſhall* CALL.—There are three terms in this paſſage,—*promiſe*, *children*, *call*—the exact meaning of which it is neceſſary to aſcertain before any deduction be attempted.

1. WHAT are we to underſtand by *the* PROMISE?—A ſatisfactory anſwer to this queſtion requires, that we ſhould fix the meaning of the term (επαγγελία) *promiſe*,—and determine what is the *matter promiſed*; for every promiſe is *of ſomething*. Reſpecting the word επαγγελία, STOCKIUS remarks: "Generatim et vi originis ANNUNCIATIONEM "ſignificat. Speciatim autem notat *promiſſionem*. "In hac ſignificatione adhibetur nunc *proprie*, "nunc *improprie* et *metonymice*. *Proprie* ſi "adhibetur, denotat *actum voluntatis*, quo pro-"mittens ſe aliquid alteri daturum, vel facturum "indicat ac denuntiat.—*Improprie* et *metonymice* "ſignificat *rem promiſſam*.—— *Complementum et* "*eventum*

" *eventum promissionis*, &c. ‡" The word often occurs in the New Testament, and is variously rendered by Latin interpreters; as, *Promissum*, *promissio*, *pollicitatio*, *repromissio*, *nuncium*, &c. And BEZA observes: " Est autem notanda hæc pro-" pria significatio επαγγελίας a doctissimo BUDÆO " observata, quæ *gratuitum esse Dei promissum* de-" clarat *." In our translation, it is generally rendered, *promise*. But in 1 John i. 5. *Message*. —The passage we are upon, seems to be of the same import with Acts xiii. 26. *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you that feareth God,* TO YOU IS THE WORD OF THIS SALVATION *sent*. ver. 32, 33. *And* WE DECLARE UNTO YOU GLAD TIDINGS, *how that the* PROMISE *which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised Jesus again*. Or, " And we *evangelize unto you that promise* which was made unto the fathers, how that God, &c."

Now, whether the term *promise*, in Peter's address, signifies strictly, according to the force of the original (ab επι et αγγελος, Denunciatio divinæ voluntatis et beneficentiæ †) *declaration*, *proclamation*, *annunciation*, *denunciation*, of the divine will and pleasure, a *message*, &c: or, more particularly denotes " an *act of the will*, whereby the promiser *shews* and *delares*, that something shall be given to another, or done for him," it amounts in fact to the same thing, the difference being only circumstantial. For in this they both agree

‡ STOCKII Clav. Nov. Test. sub voc * Annot. in loc.
†. Vid LEIGH Crit. Sac.

agree, that the *will* of the promiſer muſt be *announced* to conſtitute either; and therefore muſt imply—"A DECLARATION OF GOD'S WILL concerning ſomething." Nor is it again material whether it be taken *properly*, or *metonymically* for the *thing promiſed*; becauſe, in the preſent caſe, "*the promiſe* OF A THING" is tantamount with "*the thing promiſed*." No difficulty therefore remains but what lies in aſcertaining the *contents* of the promiſe, or *that* of which the promiſe is made.

SOME ſeek the Apoſtle's meaning from ver. 21. "*And it ſhall come to paſs that whoſoever ſhall call on the name of the Lord* SHALL BE SAVED." Some ſeek it from ver. 38. where "*the* REMISSION OF SIN" is promiſed. Others, from the laſt clauſe of the ſame verſe, "*and ye ſhall receive the* GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST;" and the rather becauſe this *immediately precedes* the controverted text. And others ſuppoſe, that Peter here uſes the phraſe, "*The promiſe*," by way of eminence and diſtinction. "The word [*promiſe*] in the New Teſtament," ſays Mr. CRUDEN, "is *often* "taken for thoſe promiſes that God heretofore "made to Abraham, and the other Patri-"archs, of ſending the *Meſſiah*: It is in this "ſenſe that the Apoſtle Paul *commonly* uſes the "word promiſe.‡" This uſe of the word in the text before us implies; The aſpect of the promiſe in its preſent accompliſhment in Jeſus Chriſt, is towards you and your children. In vindication of this ſenſe, ſeveral Expoſitors diſtinguiſh between the

‡ Concord. under the word *Promiſe*.

the Apoſtle's *advice*, and his *encouragement*. His *advice*—(1) Repent, (2) Be baptized, (3) Every one of you. His *encouragement*—(1) The remiſſion of ſins, (2) The gift of the Holy Ghoſt, (3) The well known promiſe refers to you and yours, notwithſtanding your ungrateful and cruel treatment of the Meſſiah, who was the end and ſum thereof. Thus BENEDICTUS ARETIUS: "Conſilium Petri duas complectitur partes. "Prior monſtrat facienda: Poſterior addit rationes. "Nam ſine rationibus aliquid jubere rebus afflictis "non ſatis eſt prudentis oratoris. Itaque orator "apoſtolicus perſpicuitati ſtudet. Jubet faci-"enda, ac conſilii ſubnectit admodum perſpi-"cuas rationes.—*Primum* a fine rem commen-"dat: In REMISSIONEM PECATORUM—*Alia* "*ratio* eſt, QUIA ACCIPIETIS DONUM SPIRI-"TUS *ſancti.*—*Tertio*, VOBIS ENIM eſt PROMIS-"SIO FACTA ET LIBERIS VESTRIS, h. e. de "Meſſia, et illius beneficiis, promiſſiones in pri-"mis ſpectant ad vos.—*Quarto*, declarat perſo-"nas, ad quas ſpectant promiſſiones. VOBIS & "LIBERIS VESTRIS, ET QUI LONGE SUNT *."

THIS view of the paſſage appears to me moſt agreeable to the ſcope and occaſion of it. For the Apoſtle's reply and encouragement muſt be ſuppoſed *anſwerable* to the ſolicitude and enquiry of the awakened multitude. What particularly ſtruck them, it ſeems, was, "the evidence with which the Apoſtle urged the *Meſſiahſhip* of *Jeſus*

* BENED. ARET. Comment. in Act. ii. See alſo CALVIN's admirable Notes on the text in queſtion.

from the Jewiſh writings, and the miraculous gifts which were now viſible and aſtoniſhing."—This was the great deſign of thoſe miraculous effuſions, "to reprove the world of ſin, of righteouſneſs and of judgment;" that is, to be an unparalleled and invincible demonſtration of the Meſſiahſhip of Jeſus Chriſt. This is what he *principally* aimed at, and this idea he fixes in their minds, "as a nail faſtened in a ſure place," by concluding in theſe pungent and perſuaſive expreſſions—ver. 36 "*Therefore let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly that God hath made that ſame Jeſus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt.*" The hiſtorian adds, "*Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and ſaid unto Peter, and to the reſt of the Apoſtles, Men and brethren what ſhall we do?*" Peter replies, "Repent; and your ſins, particularly your rejection and crucifixion of the Meſſiah, ſhall be remitted. Be baptized, every one of you; ſubmit to this initiatory ordinance of his kingdom, which exhibits the influences of the Holy Spirit; and Chriſt ſhall baptize you, as John his forerunner has often declared, with the Holy Ghoſt; at leaſt this is your path of duty,—he has the reſidue of the Spirit,—and do not imagine that the *grace of Chriſt*, or the bleſſings of his kingdom, are *peculiar* to *us*. For the well-known promiſe, grant, covenant, or EXHIBITION *of mercy and grace*, is common to us all. Do not ſuppoſe that *we* have any *other* divine charter, whereby we are entitled to theſe unſpeakable bleſſings,

bleſſings, than what was granted of old to our forefathers: and this, you may be ſure, is no leſs open to you, as a ground of application for the bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom, than to us. And, according to what was ſaid of old, that in HIM all the families of the earth were to be bleſſed, the time is come that the *gentile* nations, as well as our own, are to be called to him."

To *confine* the promiſe to the *miraculous* gifts of the Spirit, would be unworthy of an apoſtle; for it would be preſcribing a remedy to the multitude, cut to the heart with remorſe for their cruel treatment of Jeſus, inadequate to the diſeaſe. When he ſpeaks of *the promiſe*, it muſt be as a *ground* of their faith and their acceſs to God; but nothing can be ſo to fallen man but a diſpenſation of mercy, a ſacred warrant, ſalvation thro' a Redeemer, the miniſtry of reconciliation, in a word, the *covenant of grace* in its exhibition and direction to him. I ſay in its EXHIBITION or external form, for this, and this *alone*, properly ſpeaking, is the ground of a ſinner's approach to God. "*To us are given*, that is, EXHIBITED for our uſe and encouragement, *exceeding great and precious* PROMISES, *that by theſe we might be partakers of the divine nature.* (2 Pet. i. 4.) For the apoſtle to aſſure his hearers, that *the promiſe was to them*, in their preſent circumſtances, was the ſame as to *preach the goſpel to them.* And theſe are uſed ſynonymouſly. (See Gal. iii. 8 and 18.) For, *to give Abraham*

a divine PROMISE, is the ſame as, *to preach the* GOSPEL *to him.*

BESIDES: Is there any probability *in fact*, that ALL who complied with this exhortation received *the promiſe*, if the *miraculous gifts* of the Spirit as about to be conferred upon them, be thereby intended? Or was *this* promiſe made to the mixed multitude; to their children *as ſuch*, whether their immediate offſpring or poſterity; to *all* afar off, whether Jews or Gentiles, that the Lord ſhould *call?* If this interpretation were admitted, would it not follow, that we ſinners of the Gentiles, being ſome of the ALL *that were afar off*, upon being *called* of the Lord, upon *repentance* and *baptiſm*, may expect from *the promiſe*, the *miraculous gifts* of the Holy Ghoſt? In my opinion, it could be *then* no *juſt motive* either to repentance, to be baptized, or to any chriſtian duty, *of itſelf*; and to us who are called and afar off, it can be *no motive at all.* And, indeed, had any complied from ſuch an expectation of miraculous endowments, except in ſubordination to a *more important* promiſe, their mercenary motive muſt ſtand condemned as unworthy of chriſtianity, and therefore unworthy of an inſpired teacher of it to recommend. — But ſhould any contend, that the *promiſe* refers to the Holy Ghoſt in his ordinary gracious influences, and not merely thoſe which were miraculous, this is virtually to admit that ſenſe of the paſſage for which I plead; for it implies and eminently contains what the

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ſcriptures term, *καλ' εξοχην, the promiſe.* "To "conclude this point, the apoſtle himſelf has "plainly informed us, in another place, what he "here intends by the promiſe; ſee Acts iii. 25. "where, urging much the ſame exhortation upon "his Jewiſh hearers, as he does here, he en-"forces it with this argument: "Ye are the "children of the covenant," [or promiſe, ac-"cording to Gal. iii. 18.] "which God made "with our fathers" [or granted to our fathers; "ἧς διεθέτο ὁ Θεος προς τους πατερας ημων,] "ſaying "unto Abraham, and in thy ſeed ſhall all the "kindreds of the earth be bleſſed; unto you "*firſt* [or *primarily* for your ſake,] God hath "raiſed up his ſon Jeſus, and ſent him to bleſs "you, &c. †"

§ 49. 2. WHO are the *perſons to whom* the promiſe is made? "The promiſe is *unto* YOU, *and to your* CHILDREN, *and to* ALL *that are* AFAR OFF, *even* AS MANY *as the Lord our God* SHALL CALL." *The promiſe is unto* YOU, ſays the apoſtle; *you* who now hear me; *you* who compoſe this vaſt aſſembly, of every nation, rank or age. *You* does the Lord our God *call to repentance*, who have rejected and murdered the Prince of Life; on whom the guilt of the horrid deed, ſo impiouſly imprecated on yourſelves and children, muſt otherwiſe abide. *You*, without exception, who are *capable* of remorſe, does the Lord our God *call to repentance*, in as much as all of you have ſins to repent of; and a

 ſtate

† BOSTWICK's Fair and Rational Vindication of Inf. Bapt. p. 9.

ſtate to be changed for the better. And to *each* one of you, without the leaſt exception, is the *promiſe*, the glad tidings of mercy, made. And as *baptiſm* is the inſtituted *ſeal* of that promiſe, you may be ſure that if the one belongs to you, the other does of courſe; for if the teſtamentary grant be yours, it follows that every confirmation of that grant is yours, of which nature baptiſm is. Here we might aſk, Is it not reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that among ſo great a multitude there were ſome children and infants in arms before the apoſtle; and if ſo, by what rule were ſuch excepted from being included in this declaration —the promiſe is unto *you?* Were they not addreſſed as a body? Or, will it be ſaid, "All who are capable of *repentance* were addreſſed?" Nay, rather, all who were capable of repentance were called to repent; and all who were capable of the promiſe or divine grant, and its ſeal, were included therein. And no one can deny that infants are capable of bequeathments and grants (and conſequently the *ſealing* of them) in their favour.

But to put this matter further out of doubt, the apoſtle adds, "*the promiſe*, or grant, *is to your* CHILDREN, τοις τεκνοις." It appears to me a matter of no great moment, in this controverſy, whether we underſtand by the term *children*, ſons and daughters, ſeed, offſpring, deſcendants, poſterity, or any other the like; for none of theſe expreſſions *exclude* infants, which is ſufficient for our purpoſe. If there be any *exclu-*

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ſion in the caſe, it muſt be ſought, not from *theſe terms*, but ſome *other* conſiderations; which is foreign to the preſent point. Suppoſe, for inſtance, our opponents attempt the excluſion of infants, by adopting the term, *poſterity*; it will not ſerve their turn: for who can we underſtand by the *poſterity* of a perſon or perſons, but thoſe who lineally come after, or deſcend from ſuch? And is not the term applicable to them, as ſoon as they exiſt? Are they not ſuch in every ſtage of life? Beſides: Were that interpretation allowed, which excludes all from poſterity but adults, what would it prove? Why, that the *promiſe* is to the adult *poſterity* of this audience, tho' they were Jews or Mahometans, but *not* to the infant offspring of any Chriſtian. But muſt we regard our infant children, tho' born in ſin, *in a leſs favourable condition*, as to any merciful grant, than the obſtinate Jew, and the deluded Turk? He that *can* believe it, let him.

Nor is it material, whether the phraſe, "*all that are afar off*," refer to diſtant Jews or Gentiles; diſtant as to place or time. From this phraſe infants are not excluded, nay are clearly implied.

But, ſays Mr. B. "There is nothing ſaid about the promiſe reſpecting any, beſides thoſe whom *the Lord our God ſhall* CALL. Yes, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, whether they be parents or children, they muſt be *called*, before this text will permit us to view them as intereſted

in that promiſe of which it ſpeaks †." To this we readily ſubſcribe; but deny what he immediately ſubjoins: "which intirely excludes infants from all conſideration here." This will lead us to inquire,

§ 50. 3. WHAT are we to underſtand by the term, προσκαλεσηλαι, CALL? The word Προσκαλεομαι, which often occurs in the New Teſtament, (tho' never I believe in its active form,) plainly and properly ſignifies, *advoco*, *accerſo*, *adciſco*, *arceſſo*, &c. LEIGH: "Utrumque ſignificat, & *convocare* & *ad ſe vocare*, Mat. x. 1, &c. *" STOCKIUS: "Generatim notat *advocare*, connotato termino ad quem, ſive hic ſit perſona ſive res perſonæ oppoſita.—Eſt *vocare gentes* AD ECCLESIAM, per predicationem evangelii, Act. ii. 39‖." But here we ſhould carefully diſtinguiſh between *God's call* and *men's compliance* with it. The *latter* of theſe ideas is out of the preſent queſtion; being excluded by the nature of the ſubject, and the proper force of the term. Nor ſhould we confound the CALL *of the goſpel*, with God's *ſecret* choice of individuals, or his *efficacious* drawing of them to himſelf to love and ſerve him in ſpirit and in truth. Theſe things belong to a ſovereign inviſible diſpenſation; a diſpenſation of quite a different nature from what our apoſtle mainly intends. And indeed, with regard to what is termed *effectual calling*, which Mr. B. ſeems to take for granted is here intended, the *call*

† Pædeb. Exam. p. 362. * Critica Sacra, ſub voce.

‖ Clav. Nov. Teſt. ſub voce.

call must not be confounded with the *effect* of it. In my apprehension, the secret and efficacious influence of God on the sinner's mind, whereby it is disposed to receive the truth, is very improperly termed God's *call*. For his *calling* of them, properly speaking, is by his *word*, his will *revealed*, the *ministry* of reconciliation, &c. but what renders this calling *effectual*, is the imparted influence or powerful operation of the Spirit on the mind, and thereby a disposition, inclination, or moral ability, is produced, to *comply* with the call. Hence *many* are *called*, but *few* are *chosen**.

BESIDES: The promise, or gospel grant, is not any blessing conferred *in* CONSEQUENCE *of effectual calling*, but in *subserviency* to it. For the promise is the *foundation* of our access to God, and our *encouragement* to repentance, and not a blessing consequent upon either. Repenting, complying, coming to God, &c. are *our* acts and exercises; but without a promise they have no ground, no motive, no existence. Persons, families, and nations, are *called* THAT THEY MAY COMPLY, and the promise is given them as the *inducement*. When any *actually comply* with the purport of the call, we are taught and obliged to ascribe that efficiency, not to our own distinguishing worthiness and ability, but to the power of God, executing the plan of sovereign distinguishing love. Thus God *calls*, but man, through the stupifying effect of sin, refuses; yet

* Matt. xx. 16. xxii. 14.

when God *works* in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure, who can let? Nevertheleſs, the bleſſings promiſed, or exhibited in the promiſe, become actually ours in conſequence of our anſwering the divine requiſition or *call*.

On the whole: As the apoſtle has no reference to the *internal* power of grace, we are conſtrained to ſeek his meaning in the *external* call of the goſpel. Into whatever part of the gentile world, as if he had ſaid, the cloud of divine providence moves, from henceforth, the miniſtry of reconciliation, or God's *call* to men by the Goſpel, is deſigned to follow it. Our call has no limitation but what ariſes in the courſe of providential conduct. If *all* the gentile nations are not actually evangelized, ſuch confinement and ſeeming partiality is not owing to any limiting clauſe in our commiſſion, but to the all-wiſe conduct of providence, while it opens a door of entrance to ſome nations, and leaves others for a time ſhut. But no ſooner is a perſon, a family, a nation, or a people, *evangelized*, or addreſſed by a goſpel miniſtry, than we can aſſure them, that the promiſe is to *them and theirs*. If they *reject* the call, they reject alſo the promiſe; and if they *reject* the promiſe, grant, or covenant, they have no right to the *ſeal*; for the inſtrument and the ſeal muſt not be ſeparated. *External* compliance is ſufficient to ſecure whatever is in the covenant of an *external nature*; and baptiſm, the initiating ſeal, being *ſuch*, by that compliance it is ſecured. But an *internal* and ſpiritual compliance, and that alone

alone, ſecures to us whatever is in the covenant of an *internal* and ſpiritual *nature*. And whence the ability to comply, as before obſerved, belongs to another queſtion, and flows from the covenant of redemption, well ordered in all things and ſure, in its *internal form*.

WE might again aſk: Are any individuals, families, tribes, or nations, *proſelyted* to the viſible church of God, without being *called?* Does not *proſelyting* of neceſſity imply *calling?* Yet infants may be *proſelyted* with their parents, as parts of themſelves, as members of families, and as making a very conſiderable part of thoſe *nations* that may be *joined to the Lord*; and therefore ſuch infants ſhould be reckoned among the *called*. On the whole, the following remark of CALVIN on the place, appears very juſt and comprehenſive. "Chriſtus diruta maceria, utroſque reconciliavit "Patri, & veniens annunciavit pacem his qui "*prope* erant, & his qui *procul*. Nunc tenemus "Petri mentem. Nam ut Chriſti gratiam am-"plificet, eam Judeis ſic proponit, ut Gentes "quoque fore conſortes dicat. Ideo utitur *verbo* "*advocandi:* acſi diceret, Quemadmodum vos "prius in unum populum ſua voce collegit Deus, "ita vox eadem ubique perſonabit, ut qui remoti "ſunt, ad vos accedant, ubi novo Dei edicto "fuerint accerſiti †."

Now if this be the meaning of the text, it appears—(1) That wherever the *diſpenſation* of the goſpel comes, there the *promiſe* comes. For

† CALVINI Comment. in Act. ii. 39.

to be *called* is to be "*invited* to the honours and privileges of the viſible church;" and to be *the called*, as expreſſive of a continued ſtate, in the ſcripture ſtyle, is to be actually poſſeſſed of ſuch privileges. Thus Iſa. lxviii. 12. *Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Iſrael* MY CALLED. Rom. i. 6. *Among whom are ye alſo* THE CALLED *of Jeſus Chriſt.* ver. 7. *To* ALL *that be in Rome, beloved of God,* CALLED *to be ſaints*, &c. (2) That no people are actually *the called* of God, in a ſtate of goſpel privileges, but their children, *as theirs*, or in virtue of their right in them, are included with them. (3) When we conſider this, in connection with preceding revelations, we cannot ſay, properly, that infants' *right* to their parents' privileges, incluſive of the promiſe and initiatory ſeal, is *founded* here, but *confirmed:* rather, what is *founded* in the law of nature, what is *implied* in every diſpenſation, and what has been in many inſtances explicitly *ratified*, is here *aſſerted* and *confirmed* againſt all ſuſpicion to the contrary, viz. That the promiſe, covenant, or grant of mercy, is not more to the parents than to their children; and conſequently the initiating and confirming ſeal of that grant, baptiſm*."

§ 51. WE come now to inquire what *additional* evidence we have from the account given us of HOUSEHOLDS, from Acts xvi. 15. *When ſhe*

* It may be here remarked, that the interpretations of Dr. OWEN and WITSIUS, of HAMMOND and LIMBORCH, are not at all inconſiſtent with Pædobaptiſt principles as here ſtated, tho' produced by Mr. B. in favour of Antipædobaptiſm; and the ſame remark is applicable to numerous other inſtances, in the work I am examining.

she was baptized and her HOUSEHOLD. — Acts xvi. 33. *And was baptized, he and* ALL HIS, *straightway.* — 1 Cor. i. 16. *I baptized also the* HOUSEHOLD *of Stephanus.* But here it is necessary to premise what is the just use and real importance of these passages in the controversy. Our opponents would fain insinuate, that if we cannot demonstrate hence there actually were infants in these families, and that these were baptized, the texts in question are of *no use* to the Pœdobaptist cause. But this is a great mistake. We insist, from *other* premises, that parents *ought* to baptize their children; therefore we do not urge these texts to *prove their right*, but to *increase the probability* that they were *de facto* baptized. I say, to increase the *probability*; for it is evident from the nature of the controversy, that these texts, which refer to a case of *fact*, should be weighed only in the scales of *right*; and that the balance of probability will preponderate according as the previous right is proved or disproved.

We have insisted from various topicks — the law of nature — the divine dispensations — prophetick language — our Lord's ministry and commission, &c. — that religion, that is, Christianity, (for the *nature* of it does not alter the case) is a *family* concern. In other words, a man's children, and non-opposing domesticks, are not only to be *denominated* from his religious profession, as the head of the family, but are entitled to all the external *privileges* of that religion, as instituted means of grace and godliness, according to their respective capacities. When therefore we hear

hear of a man who has a family, that he became a believer, a disciple, or a christian, we infer (and the more excellent the nature and quality of his religion the more rational the inference) —— we infer, that his family is a *christian family*; and that each member of it, that is not an *opposer*, is entitled to those privileges he himself enjoys, according as it is capable: I say not an *opposer*, for to compel any, who are *sui juris*, would be impious, since christianity, in this important particular, does not interfere with the rights of nature. And the matter of *right* standing thus, it would be *uncharitable* and *unreasonable* to suppose the matter of *fact* to be otherwise, especially in the apostolic age. We may therefore conclude, when we read — "her HOUSEHOLD — his HOUSEHOLD — ALL HIS" — were baptized, that these things are spoken of *households* or families *as such*, or *collectively*; and that we should not understand the terms distributively, but with the proviso of *pro captu singulorum*. For, if a man's children be equally capable of baptism with himself, and believing or repenting is a qualification not at all essential to the ordinance, as belonging to its *nature*, but only necessary to those who are capable of them, there remains no ground of exception against infants; that is, if there were any children or infants in any of the families referred to, we *ought* to conclude they *were* baptized. The parent, or head of the family, would *of course*, according to all the sources of information he could consult, if a *heathen*, the light of nature, if a *Jew*, the

the Old Teſtament, and more eſpecially in either caſe from the *genius* of chriſtianity, conſider his dependants, particularly his children, being at his diſpoſal for their benefit, as entitled to the *ſame privileges*, or means of grace and religion, as himſelf—*if not* EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED.

Mr. B. availing himſelf of LIMBORCH's conceſſion, that the argument from the account of *houſeholds* being baptized, amounts to no more than a *bare probability* that there were any *infants* baptized as well as adults in thoſe families; ſeems to forget that a *bare probability (cæt. par.)* is *very ſufficient* to influence an impartial mind. For if one ſide of a queſtion be only *barely* PROBABLE, all things conſidered, the other ſide ſurely is *ſo far* IMPROBABLE. "It may admit of a query," ſays Mr. B. "whether, in this metropolis, a *majority* of houſeholds have any mere infants in them." Granted: but will it admit of a query, whether *three families* for *one* in the metropolis, or in any city, town, or pariſh in the kingdom; or, more properly, in thoſe parts of the world, and that age, which theſe paſſages refer to, had any? Our argument fairly reſts not on ONE family *ſeparately* conſidered, but on the THREE unitedly. Otherwiſe, could we produce a *thouſand* inſtances out of the ſacred records of a perſon's *houſehold*, or *all his*, being baptized, Mr. B.'s mode of arguing would leave the *probability* the *very ſame*; which is abſurd.

As to what is urged from theſe phraſes—"*Elkanah and* ALL HIS HOUSE *went up to offer unto the*

the Lord the yearly ſacrifice. A nobleman at Capernaum *believed, and his* WHOLE HOUSE. Cornelius *feared God with* ALL HIS HOUSE. *Unruly talkers ſubvert* WHOLE HOUSES. Paul and his companion *ſpake the word of the Lord* to the Philippian jailor, *and to* ALL *that were in his houſe. He, believing in God, rejoiced,* WITH ALL HIS HOUSE. *Ye know the* HOUSE *of Stephanas, that* IT *is the* FIRST FRUITS OF ACHAIA, *and that they have addicted themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints**—and the like; let any unprejudiced mind reflect, whether ſuch phraſes be not *perfectly conſiſtent* with our account of houſeholds; nay, whether they do not directly tend to *eſtabliſh* it. For is not this an idea moſt naturally ſuggeſted,—that religion, according to the *ſacred oracles*, as well as from the reaſonableneſs of the thing, is, tho' *internally* conſidered a *perſonal* concern, yet as *externally* profeſſed a *family* concern. Do not ſuch paſſages intimate, and more than barely intimate, that no ſurer do the means of grace belong to a perſon, than they belong to *his houſehold as ſuch?*—"In all which examples," ſays Mr. B. "infants muſt be excepted‖." If by *examples* he intends the *actions* connected with the univerſal terms, "whole houſe, all his houſe, &c." ſuch as, "all his houſe *went up to offer*, his whole houſe *believed*, all his houſe *feared God*, unruly talkers *ſubvert* whole

* 1 Sam. i. 21. John iv. 53. Acts x. 2. Tit. i. 11, 12. Acts xvi. 32, 34. and xviii. 8. 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

‖ Pœdob. Exam. p. 369.

whole houſes, Paul *ſpake the word* to all in a houſe," and ſo on; it is manifeſt ſuch examples are nothing to the purpoſe. For our arguments do not *imply*, what ſuch a remark ſeems alone calculated to ſhew, that we aſcribe to infants what they are *naturally incapable* of. But if by "examples" he means the univerſal terms, "all, whole, &c." as being the *ſubjects* of thoſe actions, and therefore there could be *no infants* in thoſe families; our author confutes himſelf: for he owns "it is not uncommon for the ſacred writers "to aſſert this, or the other, concerning a houſe-"hold, without any expreſs limitation; which "is manifeſtly meant of only the *greater part* *." His "examples," therefore, neither tend to ſhew that there were *no infants* in the houſeholds in queſtion, nor, ſuppoſing there were any, that they were *not baptized*. Not the *former*; for in the very examples he produces, there might have been infants, from his own *conceſſion*, provided the *greater part* be adults. Not the *latter*; for that an infant ſhould be *baptized* implies no *impoſſibility*, as the *actions* in the "examples" produced do; nor any thing *improbable* without begging the queſtion in debate. What the objection really proves, is what no one ever denied, —that there *may* be families *without* infants! To which we beg leave to make a reply ſuitable to its importance—there *may* be families *with* infants. But is it not *probable* that in *three families*

* Ibid.

lies there was an infant or a young child? And is it not *very probable*, if infants were *capable* of the rite of baptiſm as well as the parents, that they were *baptized?*—But what do I ſay? will not the following objection marr the whole?

"If our oppoſers would be true to their "argument, by acting conſiſtently with it, they "muſt, when called to baptize the *maſter* of a "family, adminiſter the ſame ordinance to his "*wife*, his *children*, and his *domeſticks*, without "exception, if not baptized before, whether "they profeſs repentance towards God, and "faith in Chriſt, or not*." No, this is not a legitimate conſequence. For

1. Tho' a maſter has a right over his children, and in ſome meaſure his other domeſticks, for their good and benefit, this does not imply that he ought to act the tyrant, to force the conſcience, or to uſe compulſion in religious matters.

2. Our argument, and our acting conſiſtently with it, require no ſuch promiſcuous and unreaſonable proceedings as the objection inſinuates. The law by which we ſuppoſe a parent or a maſter ought to be ruled in thoſe caſes is this—that he benefit his children, and *all his*, as they are *capable*. And accordingly we inſiſt,

3. That *infancy* is no greater objection to baptiſm, than to proſelytiſm or circumciſion, that is, is no juſt plea of excluſion at all; whereas an *oppoſition* to Chriſt, his goſpel, and the means of

* Pædob. Exam. p. 370, 371.

of grace, is a reasonable and scriptural ground of exclusion. No man has a right to *force* another, in matters of judgment and conscience, in proportion as that other has a right to judge for himself, even in the most advantageous and momentous concerns. And that there may be adult persons in a family, whose unalienable right of private judgment overbalances the authority and right of the domestick head, I suppose none will deny. Hence we conclude, that

4. Tho' the promise and its initiatory seal may be *rejected* by some of a man's domesticks, yet that these were *intended* and directed to him and to ALL HIS *as such*; and consequently that this is a sufficient reason for us to conclude, that ALL of them are entitled thereto, œconomically, who do not *reject* the counsel of God against themselves, as the Pharisees and lawyers did, Luke vii. 29, 30*.

§ 52. AMONG

* "When Zaccheus, who was not by birth a son of Abraham, "but a sinner, a Gentile, was thus converted, Christ enlargeth his "COVENANT to his *family* also — *This day is salvation come to this* "HOUSE, *in as much as he also is a son of Abraham*, Luke xix. 9.— "He makes [his believing in Christ] the reason why his HOUSE "should be saved also, and so the *covenant* stuck with them of his "*family* likewise, *because the father of the family was now a believer.* "— And let me add this, that as Christ once before in the conver- "sion of the Centurion, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, (Matt. viii) "did first break open the treasury of the Gentiles' conversion; so "upon occasion of this man's conversion afterwards, he shews the "*privilege* of the Gentiles *when* converted — shewing how their *cove-* "*nant* was to run by HOUSEHOLDS, in a conformity to Abraham's "family at first.—Thus in like manner, when the apostles came to "preach the gospel to a Gentile *householder*, master or father of a "*family*

§ 52. AMONG thoſe paſſages which tend to ſhew in what ſenſe the apoſtles underſtood their commiſſion with reſpect to the Jewiſh and Gentile nations, is Rom. xi. 11—31. on which I would offer the following reflections.

1. NOTHING

" *family*, they carried the offer of it in *this tenour*, and in the way of " *this privilege*, as a MOTIVE to converſion.—In the New Teſtament " we find in the *event* (which ſtill anſwers to *promiſes*) that the " goſpel ſpread itſelf thro' *whole* HOUSEHOLDS, this being the tenure " of our *covenant* —Now then, when the covenant thus runs with " the *heads of houſes* for the *families* themſelves, I argue thus from " thence for their *children*, That *they* muſt needs be included and " intended in a more *ſpecial* manner; for they are the *natural* branches, " and ſervants but *engrafted*, as was ſaid of the Jews and Gentiles in " the like caſe.—The *houſe* of Aaron and his *children*, are put for " one and the ſame, Pſ. cxv. 12, 15. In like phraſe of ſpeech Leah " and Rachel in bringing forth children, are ſaid to build up the *houſe* " of Iſrael, Ruth iv. 11. And ſo the word HOUSE is uſed for " *poſterity* in all languages. And for the further confirmation of this, " namely, that this tenure of the Gentiles' covenant in a conformity " to Abraham's, ſhould run thus *by families* from the *heads* there- " of, this doth fully ſuit with the original promiſe made to Abraham " himſelf, when the ſcripture foreſaw (as Paul's phraſe is) that the " Gentiles ſhould be juſtified—*as his ſeed.* The promiſe (Gen. xii. " 3.) runs in theſe terms, *In thee ſhall all the* FAMILIES *of the* " *earth be bleſſed*; as elſewhere (Gen. xviii. 18. and xxii. 18.) it runs " in theſe terms, *All the* NATIONS *of the earth ſhall be bleſſed.* " Theſe expreſſions are both uſed;—to ſhew, the ſeed ſhould be of " all *nations and people*; yet ſo, as withal, the covenant was to run " *by families* in thoſe nations. Therefore the New Teſtament quotes " it in both ſenſes. Gal. iii. 8. ſays παντα τα εθνη, *all nations.* " —Acts iii 25. αι πατριαι, *fatherhoods* of the earth.

" And further:—this was the *primitive and natural church way*, " under the *Law of nature* afore Moſes; unto which therefore for " ever God hath ſuited this *family covenant*, and in Abraham ratified " and ſanctified it to the end of the world.—And the reaſon why God " choſe this of a *family* to convey the covenant by, was, that this ſoci- " ety was the only *natural ſociety* of all others, and therefore God did " always

1. NOTHING leſs ſeems implied by the apoſtle, than that the converſion of the Gentiles was intended to be *national*, as appears from the whole of his reaſoning. That is, he conſiders them as a *people*, or as a *body*, in the ſame ſenſe as the Jews were ſo. All muſt allow his idea is a *collective* one; and we further inſiſt, that the *individuals* or members of the gentile or goſpel church here deſcribed cannot be adults *excluſively*. His idea of the gentile church is ſuch as *cannot agree* to a company of adult believers, or the Antipœdobaptiſt notion of the goſpel church. And if this aſſertion be made good, either they or Paul muſt be wrong. Let us briefly analyze and inveſtigate the apoſtle's reaſoning.

(1) HE

" always chooſe it throughout all ſtates of the church.—God herein " engrafting (as he uſes to do grace on nature in our ſpirits, when " he converts us, ſo) his covenant of grace upon this covenant of " nature to run in the channel of it." See Dr. THOMAS GOODWIN's Works, Vol. ii. p. 391, 392, 393.—But let the leſs informed reader carefully diſtinguiſh, in judging of God's covenant to man, to families, &c. between the *exhibition made* and the *grace poſſeſſed*. The preſent controverſy has to do immediately only with the *former*; which is *alone*, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the foundation of a ſinner's encouragement to draw near to God for mercy, grace, and every needful bleſſing. As to the notion of hereditary *grace poſſeſſed*, as if *this* deſcended from father to ſon, it is equally unſcriptural and abſurd. That the Lord ſhould condeſcend to declare, that he *will be* A GOD *unto me, and mine*, is one thing (and how unſpeakable the privilege!); but for me to conclude from thence that I am *poſſeſſed* of grace, or a perſon *actually juſtified*, would be highly preſumptuous. He is my God, *that I may* BELIEVE, &c; but not that I may conclude upon my *ſtate* as if it proved my *juſtification*, &c. And yet, when from juſt premiſes I infer my *juſtified ſtate*, I may ſafely call the Lord "*my God*" in the *more peculiar* and diſcriminating ſenſe.

(1) He employs such *general terms*, in contrasting the gospel church with the Jewish, as, we apprehend, would be very improper to express any other church state, than that which agrees to a body of people, comprehending old and young. Thus he uses the terms *Gentiles*, or *nations*; the *world*; *Israel*; &c.

(2) The manner in which he *contrasts* the *partial fall*, and the *compleat restoration* of the Jews; as also the different states of the Jews and the Gentiles; is *incompatible* with that hypotheses which we oppose.

(3) His *figurative illustration* of the Jewish and gospel churches, affords another argument in favour of our view of the subject. He speaks of the two churches as the *root* and *branches* of a tree; and the *lopping off* answers to the *grafting in*.

(4) The *assignable cause* of the Jews' rejection, *unbelief*, and the *remedial means* of their reinstatement, *believing*, are mentioned in such a connection and light, as cannot be understood of their subjects as *individuals*, but as a *body of people*, consisting of old and young, parents and children. Their unbelief consisted in the general and *national rejection* of the Messiah; and their faith, the only mean of their desirable reinstatement, must consist in a *general reception* of Christ.

(5) The *universality* of their *future conversion* is represented in such a manner as totally disagrees with the Antipœdobaptist view of gospel privileges

privileges in general, and church-membership in particular.

(6) As their *standing* before their renunciation of the Messiah was *compleat*, like a perfect olive tree consisting of root and branch, or like the vine which God brought out of Egypt, planted in Canaan, and which covered the whole land with its luxuriant ramifications; so their having *quitted* that standing is represented by the apostle in such a manner as to shew them highly *blameable* and *criminal*. That *standing*, then, was what they *ought* to have maintained; therefore it was not any *peculiarity* of covenant relation designed to cease and to be annihilated under the Messiah. Whatever they were *before* their national unbelief, their *stumbling*, and *diminishing*; whatever that *fulness* was they *fell from*, on account of which they are here represented as *faulty* and *sinful*; it inevitably follows, that it was such a *standing* and *fulness* as the gospel was not *intended* to abolish, but was calculated to establish and promote. But what could such a *standing* and compleat *fulness* or abundance be? Was it their *standing* fast in *personal piety?* Was it their abounding in *adult believers*, when it was attempted to prevent their downfall? Was it any *peculiar privilege* designed to last until the Messiah came, and no longer? No: neither of these suppositions can possibly be true. Not the *two first*,—for they are contradicted by plain matter of fact; nor the *last*,—for it is incontrovertibly *implied*, that if they left their standing,

ſtanding, and loſt their fulneſs, it was owing to their ſin, their *blindneſs*, &c. and on the other hand, if they, as a nation or body of people, received the Redeemer, their fall and diminution would be *prevented.*

In ſhort, from the very dawn of goſpel light nothing elſe was intended than their *national ſalvation*, or continued *church-relation* to God as a body at large. To this tended the flaming zeal of John the Baptiſt; to this tended the venerable miniſtry of the Son of God, and the conſtant efforts of his miniſtring diſciples, under his direction; to this tended the unwearied labours, fervent prayers, and affectionate exhortations of his inſpired apoſtles; and eſpecially after this Paul ardently purſued; to accompliſh this he could *wiſh himſelf accurſed from Chriſt*, and for non-ſucceſs herein he had *great heavineſs and continual ſorrow in his heart.* (Rom. ix. 2, 3.)

But, if this was the real avowed *intendment* of the goſpel miniſtry, which Mr. B. neither does, nor, I preſume, can deny, relative to all the inhabitants of Judea; it follows from the *whole drift* of the apoſtle's argumentation—from the *general terms* he employs—from the *contraſt* he draws—and from his *figurative illuſtrations* and compariſons,—that the real avowed intendment of the goſpel miniſtry among the Gentiles or *all the nations* of the world, is nothing leſs extenſive than their *national ſalvation*, that is, their external church-relation to God as bodies at

at large, comprehensive of all ages and descriptions of mankind *.

MOREOVER: the *future fulness* of the Jews, to be accomplished by their embracing Jesus Christ as their Messiah, will *reinstate* them in their former position, ver. 23. *And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be* GRAFTED IN AGAIN. "Grafted in again!"—how? *reinstate* them! in what? No solid answer but one can be assigned, viz. In all those *church-privileges* which they enjoyed, as a general body of people, excepting what was merely typical and ceremonial. But the *church-membership* of infants and children was *not such*; it was before Moses, before Abraham, more ancient than the flood, yes, coeval with the first family in the world. Therefore, *this* will be a part of the restored privilege. While they continue to renounce all connection with Christ the Life of the tree, his church, they must needs be withered branches; but, re-

 ceiving

* The inspired prophets "extol not merely the inherent excellence, but *wide extent*, of the heavenly kingdom. Whenever the prospect rises before them, and it was often presented to their view, their heart glows with instant rapture at the splendid scene; the powers of language are exhausted to convey their lofty conceptions of those days of gladness, when all nations whom the Lord hath made shall turn unto him, and walk in the light of his holy word. We do not assert, that in order to warrant the expressions used on this occasion, it is necessary that every individual of the human species should serve God with a pure heart and faith unfeigned: but if the *whole race* shall not hereafter be, what they have not yet been, VISIBLE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, language is useless, and words have no meaning." CHURTON's Bampton's Lectures, Serm. vii. p. 223.

ceiving him, both the branches and their *buds* ſhall vegetate again in the viſible univerſal church.

Mr. B. in his *Reflection* on ver. 16. ſays: "Here "it may be obſerved, that baptiſm is not the ſub-"ject of Paul's diſcourſe." Granted: but he muſt grant alſo in his turn, that *church-memberſhip* and *church-privileges* are the ſubject of Paul's diſcourſe. And he will find it too difficult to ſhew, that baptiſm is not *included* therein; which leads me to another reflection, viz.

§ 52. 2. THAT the apoſtle's reaſoning *neceſſarily includes infant baptiſm.* It has been I think demonſtrated, in the laſt ſection, that infant church-memberſhip and privileges are included in his reaſoning; that the chriſtian church both of Gentiles and Jews, muſt, according to him, be made up in a great meaſure of infants and children. That is to ſay, the goſpel miniſtry or diſpenſation *deſigns* and *intends*, in its own nature, nothing ſhort of this. But if ſo, the conſequence is evident, that they are *intitled* thereto by the very nature of the goſpel church, and a *divine grant.* According to Paul, that is, according to the genuine ſpirit and native tendency of the goſpel; according to the *Will of God*; according to the laſt will and teſtament of Jeſus, which he ſealed with his own blood; and according to the witneſs of the ſpirit of truth, by whoſe infallible direction Paul reaſoned and wrote,—infants have a *right* of church-memberſhip with their parents. But who ſees not, that if they have that right, they have, of courſe, a right to *baptiſm*, the ceremony of *initiation.* To deny this

this would be as ridiculous as to say, that a man and his family have a legal right to a house, but dare not enter it thro' the door, the only door, that leads to it; or, that he has a legal right to certain premises, but has nothing to do with the ways and avenues leading thereto.

THE apostle says (Rom. xi. 16.) *For if the first fruit be* HOLY, *the lump is also* HOLY: *and if the root be* HOLY, so *are the branches.* On which Mr. B. reflects, that the word *holy* is mentioned, "in reference to the *ancient patriarchs*, "especially Abraham: in reference to those con- "verted Jews, that were the *first fruits* of a "christian ministry: and in reference to the *fu-* "*ture conversion* of Abraham's posterity, in the "latter day." And immediately infers, "that "the passage has no regard to any christian pa- "rent, as a *root*; or to his infant offspring, as "*branches* arising from it†." But how do the premises, supposing them unexceptionable, support his conclusion? For suppose the *first fruit* be the *ancient patriarchs*, were not those their descendants who *received* the Messiah a part of the *Lump* or consecrated mass? Or, must we say, that their reception of him, and submission to his righteous government, made them an *unholy*, or *less* holy, part of that Lump? It cannot be denied, that what is here called the *lump* intends the *descendants* of these patriarchs as such, without any exception of infants; the *infants*, therefore, of their descendants, who had not as yet embraced the Messiah, were of the *holy* lump, and shall those parts of the same mass be pro-

† Pædob. Exam. *p.* 373.

nounced *unholy*, BECAUSE of their parents' obedient faith? While *to-day* the parent *rejects* the Meſſiah, he and his children are parts of the *holy lump* alike; but *to-morrow* the parent *embraces* the ſame invaluable bleſſing, and HE *continues* in his privilege, and has it greatly *increaſed*, but his CHILDREN — ſtill the *deſcendants* of Abraham, and, were it not for their parents' *faith!* would ſtill be *holy* — his *children* become *unholy*. While they were *holy*, it was their *privilege*, for in that view the apoſtle ſpeaks of it. But lo! on Antipœdobaptiſt principles, the parents' *faith*, makes the child *unholy!* The parent's *promotion*, *degrades* the child! "He that *can* believe it let him believe it."

AGAIN: ſuppoſing the *firſt fruit* to intend the firſt Jewiſh converts to chriſtianity; it ſtill follows that the *whole maſs*, of which they are a part, is *holy*: and it appears from the ſcope of the paſſage, that this holineſs of the lump is not what *ſhall hereafter* take place, as the *effect* of goſpel preaching; but is repreſented as the encouraging reaſon why the goſpel *ought* to be preached to them. The apoſtle's argument, it ſeems, is not, Inaſmuch as ſome Jews *do* now believe, this is a token and pledge that Abraham's poſterity at large *ſhall* believe hereafter: but rather, — becauſe the *other* parts of the lump are *no leſs* holy than that which received the Meſſiah; *therefore* there was an encouraging proſpect of their converſion alſo. But if this be denied, the caſe is ſtill worſe. For if it be ſaid, that the Jewiſh converts to chriſtianity were the *firſt fruit* in

in reference to the future church ſtate of *all Iſrael*; and that the conſecration of the *part* ſanctified the *whole*: it then follows, contrary to what our opponents are willing to allow, that the unconverted are *ſanctified*, or made *holy*, by being only related to chriſtians; and if ſo, for the ſame reaſon children may be ſaid to be ſanctified or holy by their relation to chriſtian parents. For to ſay, that the *remote* poſterity of any is holy on account of its relation to him, but not his *immediate* deſcendants who are more nearly and cloſely related to him, is, I ſuppoſe, ſufficiently abſurd. I now appeal to the intelligent and impartial reader, whether this is not a fair and full reply to Mr. B's objection.

But as it is my profeſſed deſign not only to confute error, but alſo to inveſtigate truth, it may be proper to inquire, what is the real import of the term HOLY, here uſed by St. Paul? "By *holy* is here meant," ſays Mr. Locke, "that relative holineſs whereby any thing hath an *appropriation* to God†." Or, more particularly, we may ſay, A *holy* perſon, in the relative ſenſe of that word, is one to whom God gives a covenant grant of mercy and the means of grace, and in virtue of which grant he is *appropriated* to God. This appears to me to be the leading idea of the term, and its preciſe import in the preſent connection; tho' ſometimes uſed in a different ſenſe. For if the whole nation of the Jews was *holy* in the apoſtolic age, the *whole maſs*

† *Note* on Rom. xi. 16.

as well as the *firſt fruit*, the *natural branches* as well as the *root*, as the apoſtle aſſerts; if the *future* deſcendants of Abraham and the patriarchs are to be regarded as *holy*, as Mr. B. allows, and for which reaſon they are not to be deſpiſed and inſulted by the Gentiles; then the *preſent* Jews are ſo in the like ſenſe: except we hold that the *both ends* of a genealogical chain has an *appropriation* to God, while the *intermediate* links are *unclean*. Which is the ſame thing as to ſay, that this genealogical chain is at once, and in the ſame reſpect, a *conductor* and a *non-conductor* of this relative holineſs.

But what is deſerving of particular notice is, that there are ſeveral *degrees* of relative holineſs; and that, in ſcripture eſtimation, a perſon may be, relatively, *holy* in one ſenſe, while *unclean* in another. Accordingly, in a very general ſenſe, *no man* is to be deemed unclean under the goſpel diſpenſation (Acts x. 28.), but *every man*, whether Jew or Gentile, is deemed *holy*; i. e. in virtue of the goſpel *grant* of mercy and the means of grace to the Gentiles as well as the Jews, *all mankind* without diſtinction of nation or tribe, are *appropriated* to God, or pointed out by him as the intended objects of ſuch a grant. When the command was given to preach the goſpel to *every creature*, to propoſe the means of grace to *all mankind*, they were virtually declared *holy*, and not *dogs* as before reckoned. The *promiſe*, or covenant grant, is now not only to the Jews and their children, but to *all that are afar off*; for

all

all the nations are as much the *designed* objects of the call, as the inhabitants of Judea were when the apostle wrote; and when any are actually among *the called*, that design is in them accomplished. — Now, when incorporated with the visible church, they are termed *holy* in a more particular sense. They are then more particularly appropriated to God; the promise is to them more directly; they are more expressly intitled to all the means of grace and salvation, according to their capacity. And, compared with this degree of relative holiness, those who are *holy* in the former sense, are yet *unclean*. Thus an idolater and his family in the one sense, that is, in reference to any divine *prohibition*, or any *exclusive* clause in the covenant, promise, or grant of mercy, is no longer common or unclean, but relatively *holy*. Yet in reference to the *called*, the incorporated members of the visible church, the same idolater and his family are *not* holy but *unclean*. The one is *holy* because he *may partake*, in virtue of a divine appointment; the other is *more holy* (and in *comparison* of whom the former is unclean) because he actually *does partake* of general church-membership and privileges, and therefore baptism.

I SAY *general* church-membership, to distinguish it from that which belongs to any *particular* congregation, or even denomination of christians. For tho' we contend that baptism is the rite of admission into the *universal* church of

Chriſt, or *general body* of chriſtians, of which all denominations of chriſtian people are parts; yet this is perfectly conſiſtent with congregational worſhip and diſcipline, with diſſenting churches, and the independent form in particular. And this indeed the practice of independents abundantly confirms, for when they admit any into *ſpecial* memberſhip, it is immaterial whether the parties were baptized in Ruſſia or Italy, in Holland or England; in the eſtabliſhment or among diſſenters, or by what denomination of diſſenters; it is ſufficient in that reſpect, that they have been recognized *general* church-members by baptiſm. The *other* memberſhip is not to conſtitute them profeſſed chriſtians, but is intended for the better promoting of their edification, in a manner as near as poſſible to the intention of the inſpired rubrick.

§ 53. We now proceed to examine another paſſage, from whence we may gather, in what light the apoſtles viewed the children of believing, or chriſtian parents; and that is 1 Cor. vii. 14. *For the unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is ſanctified by the huſband: elſe were your children unclean; but now are they holy.* "On the *matureſt* and moſt *impartial* "conſideration of this text," ſays Dr. Doddridge, "I muſt judge it to refer to *infant* "*baptiſm*. Nothing can be more apparent, than "that the word *holy*, ſignifies perſons, who *might* "*be admitted* to partake of the *diſtinguiſhing rites* "of God's people. Compare Exod. xix. 6.

"Deut.

" Deut. vii. 6. chap. xiv. 2. chap. xxvi. 19. " chap. xxxiii. 3. Ezra ix. 2. with Isai. xxxv. " 8. chap. lii. 1. Acts x. 28. &c. And as " for the interpretation, which *so many* of our " brethren the Baptists have contended for, that " *holy* signifies *legitimate*, and *unclean illegitimate*; " (not to urge that this seems an *unscriptural* " sense of the word) nothing can be more evi- " dent, than that the argument will by no means " bear it*." It was not without reason that the Doctor expressed himself with some limitation respecting the interpretation he opposes, thus, " which *so many* of our brethren the Baptists;" for they are by no means agreed, how to com- pass the wresting of this text from the Pœdo- baptists. Dr. S. for instance, is of opinion " that legitimacy is not here intended†." And thus he assigns his reasons for dissenting herein from some of his brethren: " If one party's " being a believer makes cohabitation lawful, " it should seem to follow as a natural conse- " quence, that when neither is a believer co- " habitation is unlawful; which is a propos- " tion no one will maintain. But (says he,) let " us examine the question respecting *legitimacy* " a little more attentively. The apostle's object " in this context was, no doubt, to dissuade " those christians who were married to unbe- " lievers from any thoughts of a separation. And " the consideration of their having been law- " fully married, was most certainly a good " argument to enforce such advice; and the

* Fam. Expos. *in loc.* † Ans. to Dr. A. p. 3.

" rather, as a divorce would be likely to bring " diſhonour on their offspring, in the opinion " of thoſe who might not know the true cauſe " of it. But if he meant to urge this argu- " ment, it is ſcarce imaginable he would de- " ſcribe the lawfulneſs of the marriage contract " by the phraſe of *the unbelieving huſband's being* " *ſanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife* " *by the huſband*; ſince the validity of the " marriage did not, could not, in the nature of " the thing, depend upon one party's being a " *believer*. Whether he or ſhe were or were " not a believer, the marriage would have been " good; nor would a ſeparation, upon pretence " of their not being of the ſame faith, have " made the children *illegitimate* ‖." Mr. BOOTH, however, warmly pleads for what Dr. STENNETT ſtrenuouſly oppoſes.

BUT as the real meaning of the text very much depends on the exact import of certain terms, it will be neceſſary to pay our principal attention to them; and thence to deduce the apoſtle's meaning.

1. THE terms ακαθαρτος and αγιος ſhould be aſcertained. Theſe " are uſed here by the apoſ- " tle in the Jewiſh ſenſe. The Jews called all " that were Jews, *holy*; and all others they cal- " led *unclean*. Thus *proles genita* EXTRA *ſanc-* " *titatem*, was a child begot by parents whilſt " they were yet heathens; *genita* INTRA *ſanc-* " *titatem*, was a child begot by parents after " they were proſelytes. This way of ſpeaking " St.

‖ Ibid. p. 85.

" St. Paul transfers from the Jewish into the " christian church, calling *all* that are of the " christian church *saints*, or holy, by which rea- " son all that were out of it were *unclean**." The same author elsewhere observes: " The heathen " world had revolted from the true God, to " the service of idols and false gods, Rom. i. " 18—25. The Jews being *separated* from this " corrupted mass, to be the *peculiar people* of " God, were called *holy*, Exod. xix. 5, 6. Numb. " xv. 40. They being cast off, the professors of " christianity were *separated* to be the people of " God, and so became *holy*, 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10‡." Thus Mr. BAXTER: " The common and I " doubt not true exposition is, That it is meant " of a state of *separation to God*, as a peculiar " people from the world, as the church is se- " parated.——It is generally agreed, that the " *most common* use of the word *holy*, if not the " *only*, both in scripture and prophane writers, " is, to signify *a thing separated* TO GOD: and " to *sanctify* any thing, is to *separate it* TO GOD. " *Omne sanctum est* DEO *sanctum*; whatsoever is " holy, is holy *to God*. This therefore being " the *proper* sense and *ordinary* use of the word, " I take myself bound to receive it as the mean- " ing here, till I know more reason to the contrary. " —Now as *holiness* thus signifieth *a separation* " *to God*, so it may be distinguished thus; a " person or thing may be holy, or separated

* LOCKE's Paraphr. *in loc. Note.* ‡ Id. chap. i, 2. *Note.*
‖ Plain Script. Proof, p. 80.

" to God, either in ſtate and *ſtanding relation*; " or elſe only for ſome particular *act* or *uſe*, " whether for ſhorter time or longer*." When contending with his redoubtable antagoniſt, Mr. TOMBES, and bearing hard on him by urging the conſtant uſe of the word *holy*, he gives him a ſyllogiſtick overthrow thus: " If the conſtant " meaning of the word *holy* be for a *ſeparation* " *to God*, then we muſt ſo underſtand it here, " except there be a palpable neceſſity of un- " derſtanding it otherwiſe; but the conſtant ſenſe " of the word *holy* is for a ſeparation to God, " and here is no palpable neceſſity of under- " ſtanding it otherwiſe: Therefore we muſt ſo " underſtand it here*." And here it is obſervable, that Mr. TOMBES denied not that the *conſtant* meaning of the word *holy* was as Mr. BAXTER ſaid. The latter had alſo urged, that the ſenſe of the term *holy*, for which he pleaded, was uſed in ſcripture near SIX HUNDRED TIMES, and the other ſenſe NO WHERE uſed. " Here," —— ſays the keen diſputant, conſcious of the truth on his ſide, and ſomewhat touched with indignation; and is it to be much wondered at, when his ſide of the queſtion was illuminated with near *ſix hundred* rays of evidence, and the other confeſſedly *all dark?*—" here Mr. TOMBES " denied not but that the word was taken *ſo* " *oft* in *my* ſenſe, and *never* in *his*; and yet" —— and yet! —— " denied the conſequence. " I do therefore (ſays the good man) here re- " quire all men that are not of deſperate reſolu- " tions,

* Ibid. p. 82.

" tions, and proſtituted conſciences, to conſider " faithfully; whether he be likely to make a " more comfortable anſwer before the bar of " Chriſt, who ſaith, Lord, I ſearched after thy " will in thy word as far as I was able, and I " durſt not raſhly venture on my ſingular fancy, " but in my admitting or bringing infants into " thy viſible church, I grounded my judgment and " practice on thy word, in the ſame ſenſe as " it is uſed near *ſix hundred* times in the ſcrip- " ture — I ſay, will not this man have a bet- " ter plea than he that ſhutteth infants out of " the church upon the expoſition of ſcripture in a " ſenſe as it is *never* elſe uſed in, but near *ſix* " *hundred* times otherwiſe?" — Again: " If the " apoſtle by *holy* ſhould have meant, *that they* " *were not baſtards*, then he ſhould have ſpoke " in a phraſe which they were unlikely to " underſtand; and ſo his ſpeech might tend to " draw them into miſtakes, and not to edify " them. For if the word *holy* were *conſtantly* " uſed (even near ſix hundred times in the bi- " ble) for a *ſeparation to God*, and NEVER uſed " for legitimacy (all which Mr. TOMBES de- " nieth not), then what likelihood was there " that the apoſtle ſhould mean it for legitimacy, " or the people ſo underſtand him? If I ſhould " write an epiſtle to a chriſtian congregation " now, and therein tell them, that their chil- " dren are all by nature *unholy*, would they " ever conjecture that I meant that they were " all *baſtards* * ?"

BUT

* *Ut ſupra*, p. 83.

BUT here, were we disposed to retort on the use of terms, with what propriety may we ask, "Is *illegitimate* in one case, and *legitimate* in the other, the NATURAL and PRIMARY signification of those Greek words (ακαθαρτος and αγιος)? Are these the senses that would naturally *first* occur to the mind of a wise and impartial person, on reading or hearing the apostolick observation ‖?" The inquisitive and learned Mr. BAXTER replies,—"*Six hundred to one* it is not." And Dr. GUYSE observes: "The terms (ακαθαρτος) "*unclean*, and (αγιος) *holy*, occur almost numberless times in the *Seventy* and in the New "Testament; but I don't find that they are *ever* "ONCE used to signify *illegitimate* and *legiti-*"*mate*, which is the sense that some would "here put upon them. And as the apostle "was speaking of persons already married, and "marriage is a civil ordinance of the God of "nature, there was *no room to doubt*, whether "the children of such unbelieving and believ-"ing parents were *legitimate*, or not, since *that* "depends intirely on the legitimacy of the "*marriage* and not at all on the *religious* cha-"racter of the husband and wife, whether one, "or both, or neither of them, were christians "or no*." To this I will add the following remarks of Dr. WHITBY: "He doth not say, "Else were your children *bastards*, but now "they are *legitimate*; but, else were they *un-*"*clean*, *i. e.* heathen children, not to be owned "as an holy seed.—That this is the true import "of the words ακαθαρτα and αγια will be ap-

"parent

‖ Pœdob. Exam. 322. * Paraphr. in loc. Note.

" parent from the ſcriptures, in which the Hea-
" thens are ſtyled *the unclean*, in oppoſition to
" the Jews in covenant with God, and there-
" fore ſtyled *an holy people.* So Iſa. xxxv. 8.
" ακαθαρτος, the UNCLEAN, *ſhall not paſs over it.*
" —Chap. lii. i. There ſhall no more come
" unto thee ακαθαρτος, *the* UNCLEAN. So Acts
" x. 28. *God hath ſhewed me that I ſhould call no*
" *man common, or,* ακαθαρτον, UNCLEAN. Whence
" it is evident, that the Jews looked upon
" themſelves as δουλοι Θεου καθαροι, *the clean ſervants*
" *of God,* Neh. ii. 20. and upon all Heathens,
" and their offſpring, as unclean, by reaſon of
" their want of circumciſion, the ſign of the
" covenant. Hence whereas it is ſaid, that
" Joſhua *circumciſed* the people, chap. v. 4. the
" ſeptuagint ſay, περιεκαθαρεν, he *cleanſed* them.
" Moreover, of Heathen children, and ſuch as
" are not circumciſed, they ſay, *They are not*
" *born in holineſs*; but *they* on the contrary are
" ſtyled σπερμα αγιον, *an holy ſeed,* Iſa. vi. 13.
" Ezra ix. 2. and the offſpring from them,
" and from thoſe proſelytes which had embraced
" their religion, are ſaid to be born *in holineſs,*
" and ſo thought fit to be admitted to circum-
" ciſion, or baptiſm, or whatſoever might initiate
" them into the Jewiſh church. And therefore
" to this ſenſe of the words *holy* and *unclean,*
" the apoſtle may be here *moſt rationally* ſuppoſed
" to allude, declaring that the ſeed of holy per-
" ſons, the offſpring born εκ των αγιασμενων, *of*
" *ſaints,* as chriſtians are ſtill called in the New
" Teſtament

" Teſtament, are alſo *holy*. (See note on chap. " i. 2.) And though one of the parents be ſtill " an Heathen, yet is the denomination to be " taken from the *better*, and ſo their offſpring " are to be eſteemed not as Heathens, i. e. " *unclean*, but *holy*, as all chriſtians by denomi- " nation are. So CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS " (Strom. L. iii. p. 445. D.) infers, ſaying, " *I ſuppoſe the ſeed of thoſe that are holy is* HOLY, " *according to that ſaying of the apoſtle Paul, The* " *unbelieving wife is ſanctified by the huſband*, " &c. — The word uſed for a *baſtard* by this " apoſtle being νόθος, Heb. xii. 8. and the word " γνήσιος being the proper word for a *legitimate* " offspring, had the apoſtle *intended* ſuch a ſenſe, " [as our opponents plead for] he would have " uſed the words, which in the greek writers " are generally uſed in that ſenſe, and not ſuch " words as in the ſeptuagint, and in the Jewiſh " language, ALWAYS have a relation to fœderal " [or relative] holineſs, or the want of it; but " NONE AT ALL *to the legitimacy or ſpuriouſneſs* " of the birth*."

THESE quotations are inſerted, not ſo much to ſhew what were the *opinions* of theſe learned writers (for the general current of expoſitors runs in the ſame channel) but for the ſake of the *reaſons* and *grounds* by which their interpretation is ſupported. A gentleman well known to my opponent, on a certain occaſion borrows the following paſſage, which, becauſe it is common

* Comment. *in loc.*

mon property, I here insert: "We are not "to forsake the *genuine* and *natural* signification "of words, unless there be the HIGHEST EVI-"DENCE that the author did otherwise intend "them, saith the Civil Law. And as AUSTIN "says, The proper signification of words is al-"ways to be retained, unless NECESSITY inforce "us to expound them otherwise.—What better "evidence can we have of the sense of a place, "than that, had an author *intended* such a "meaning, he could have used no plainer "expression to declare it*."

BUT says Mr. B. "Whatever the apostle intends by the word *holy*, as here applied to children, one of whose parents is a believer; it is not confined to the *infants* of such persons, but belongs to *all* their offspring, whether younger or older; whether born *before* the conversion of either parent, or after that happy event had taken place: for the *children*, without any distinction are pronounced holy ‡." And what then? Does the aspect of the gospel dispensation, or God's *grant* of mercy to the Heathen, who were not *a people*, appear *less* amiable because it smiles on *all* the children of a christian, and not on some only? Or, what inconvenience is there in allowing, what impropriety in maintaining, that the relative holiness for which we plead, while granted to the parent, should

* Pœdob. Exam. p. 324. From FERGUSON's Interest of Reason in Religion. p. 328, 333, 334, 462.

‡ Pœdob. Exam. p. 389.

ſhould be alſo granted to *all his?*—But will not this be the fearful conſequence? "If it be lawful to baptize them on the ground of this holineſs, while infants, it muſt be equally ſo when grown up‖." Very true—and what harm can this blunted arrow do? Is not this the very thing we plead for; provided you grant that this reaſonable poſtulate ſhould be taken into the account; viz. That whatever *right* an adult has, in virtue of a divine *grant*, to any religious privileges, Chriſtianity will juſtify no *compulſive* meaſures for the purpoſe of intruding on him theſe privileges againſt his good will and liking. Chriſtianity does not annihilate, nay in this inſtance does not ſuſpend, the *natural rights* of parents and children. And what can be more plain than this, that the natural authoritative right of parents over their children, for their good, is in a great degree abſolute, while *infants*; and that *in proportion* as they grow up to reaſon and manhood, this authoritative right is *leſſened?* Nor is there any more difficulty in aſcertaining theſe degrees, than in tranſacting the common concerns of life, where any degree of wiſdom and prudence are required. At leaſt, a chriſtian miniſter could not, in the nature of the thing, be more at a loſs how to act in this caſe, than in determining the *degrees* of teaching, and the kind of profeſſion, requiſite in adults. We will ſuppoſe, therefore, that God by his apoſtle pronounces *the children*

‖ Ibid.

dren of a christian without exception *holy*, and let us further suppose some of them are *infants*, and others *grown up*. If God pronounce them *holy*, that is, direct his grant of mercy to them, declaring *the promise* is to them, and that they are all alike, in common with their parents, welcome to his visible church; it is manifest there lies no objectionable ground to their baptism, but their own *dissent* from the christian connection, their perverse *opposition* to its humbling doctrines and holy laws. Are they *compliable?* willing to enter into the school, that is, the church of Christ? or, in other words, do they believe with all the heart, that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah? Who can *forbid* water? On the other hand, do they *oppose?* are they unwilling to enter the school, to embrace its doctrines and to be governed by its laws? Who has power to *constrain?* For, in the nature of the case, in proportion as the opposition is criminal or morally evil, the authority of the parent is weakened.

It is again objected: "That *holiness* of which the inspired author speaks, is not inferred from the *faith* of the believing parent, but from the *sanctification* of the unbelieving party, *by*, or *to*, the believer†." But does not this involve a contradiction? For, surely, if the sanctification of the unbelieving party is *by* the *believer*, as such, it must be inferred from his *faith*. And again, if the sanctification be *by* the believer, how can it

† Pædob. Exam. p. 389.

it be *to* him? Are not the two renderings of the prepoſition εν, *by* and *to*, of which the objector gives us our choice, eſſentially different and contradictory? If we ſay *to* him; the effect, ſanctification, muſt be cauſed by another, that it may terminate on him. But if we ſay *by* him; he muſt be the cauſe, that the effect may terminate on another.—This diverſity of rendering, and the importance of the term *ſanctified*, make it neceſſary that we ſhould,

§ 54. 2. ATTEMPT to aſcertain the import of the phraſe ηγιασται εν. "On this term "*ſanctified*, ſays Mr. B. the inſpired writer ma- "nifeſtly lays a peculiar emphaſis; *ſuch* an "emphaſis, that it ſeems to be the governing "word of the whole ſentence, and a *key* to "its true meaning. For it is twice mentioned "as containing the *grand reaſon*, why the be- "lieving party ſhould neither deſert, nor divorce, "the unconverted companion; and alſo as ex- "preſſing *the ground* of that holineſs which is "aſcribed to their children†." This, then, being the *key* to unlock the text, and diſcover its contents, let us examine the *wards*, and ſee whether they fit Mr. B.'s interpretation. "BENGELIUS, ſays our author, con- "ſiders the holineſs of the *children*, and of the "*unbelieving* parent, as *the ſame*; becauſe ηγιασται, "and αγια εστιν, differ only as, to be *made holy*, "from to *be holy*." On which he reflects: "If "then, that ſanctification of the unbelieving huſ- "band

† Ibid. p. 400.

" band, gives him no claim to baptism; the " holiness thence arising cannot invest his *chil-* " *dren* with such a right‡." This our author seems to consider as an insurmountable objection. And in the same light, we suppose Dr. S. views it. " Now I readily admit, says he, " that the children of believers, or of parents, " one of whom only is a believer, are here " stiled *holy*. But then I insist, that such chil- " dren are in no other sense *holy*, than is the " unbelieving parent also. For the apostle as " expressly asserts that the unbelieving husband " is sanctified or made holy (ηγιασται) by the " wife, and the unbelieving wife sanctified or " made holy by the husband, as that the chil- " dren of such parents are holy (αγια). And, " thus considered, it will follow, that if the " holiness of the children, whatever be the sense " of the word here, is to be admitted as a " proof that they are included in the christian " covenant, the holiness of the unbelieving pa- " rent is to be admitted as a proof that such " parent is included in the christian covenant " also. And, if upon this ground the former " have a right to the positive institutions of " Christ, upon the same ground the latter has " also§." But this objection has been sufficiently replied to, virtually, in the last section; when treating of *adult* children, who are relatively *holy* though unbelievers, or opposers to the

‡ p. 390. § Ans. to Dr. A. p. 81, 82.

the chriſtian faith. And were we to grant, according to our opponents' wiſhes, that the children are holy in no higher ſenſe than the *unbelieving* parent is, it would ſtill follow, on the principle already ſtated, that the *children* ought to be baptized, but not the parent. The one and the others have the grant of a privilege, the covenant and its initiatory ſeal; and the believing parent has a divine right and rubrick for having the ſeal applied to the *children*, who are at his diſpoſal for their good, and who do not *oppoſe* the faith; but this cannot extend to the *unbelieving* partner, his unbelief counteracting his relative ſanctification.

THUS we may obſerve, theſe two reſpectable authors, though widely differing in their interpretations of the text, are equally confident that *relative holineſs*, which intitles to chriſtian ordinances, is not intended. "It may be difficult, ſays Dr. S. to fix his [the Apoſtle's] "preciſe meaning; but if we will make reaſon, "ſcripture, and fact our guide, it cannot be "difficult to determine upon ſome of the ſenſes "given, that they are not his meaning. Perſonal *internal holineſs*, for inſtance, cannot be "here intended*." In *this* deciſion, I believe the generality of Pœdobaptiſts will readily concur; though ſome divines have pleaded for *real* holineſs, as here aſcribed to the *children*, and particularly Dr. THOMAS GOODWIN†. On this head

* Ibid. † Works, Vol. ii. p. 400, &c.

head Mr. B. is sufficiently explicit: "Neither "have we any reason to think, that the chil- "dren of believers are denominated holy, in "reference to *internal sanctification*‖." What, then, does this gentleman think was the *holiness* referred to, whereby the unbelieving party was *sanctified* by the believer? That which you have seen confuted by Dr. STETNETT in the last section—*marriage!* Take his own words: "The public and voluntary act of taking the "woman for a wife, and the man for a hus- "band. By this transaction, according to the "legal custom of their country, they mutually "*gave up*, or *set apart*, themselves one to ano- "ther*." Well, reader, what say you to this? Here is, ——*one infidel* SANCTIFYING *another!* Or, if you had rather, *each infidel* SANCTIFYING *himself!*

IF ηγιαςαι signify no more than *to be married*, or to be *given up* in marriage, the one party to the other, it had no influence to satisfy their scruples. For the Israelites, who had married idolatrous wives, could say the same; yet it was no sufficient plea that one of them had been ηγίαςαι, in Mr. B.'s sense, *set apart* to the other. The question would still return, How shall I know that this party that has been *given up* to me, is not to be discarded, or put away, as in Ezra x. 3, &c.? If our author's explanation be admitted, it is to make the Apostle to solve a case of conscience in a manner totally unwor- thy

‖ Pædob. Exam. p. 392. * Ibid. p. 400.

thy of him; for he muſt do it by aſſerting a *fact*, that they were once married, of which they were as well aſſured before it was aſſerted: while he ſays nothing of the *lawfulneſs* of that fact, which could be the only ground of ſcruple. The doubts of theſe Corinthian queriſts were raiſed by reflecting on the *quality* of the relation contracted, and not the *fact*; whereas the apoſtle, if our author be right, ſolves the difficulty by paſſing by the *quality*, and aſſerting the fact; that is to ſay, by ſaying ſomething wide of the point, but nothing at all to the purpoſe. Whereas, had it been his deſign to prove the *validity* of their marriage, would he not naturally have done it by ſuggeſting ſome middle term or conſideration, beſides barely referring them to the fact? Was it not neceſſary for them, that they ſhould be certified of the *lawfulneſs* and *propriety* of their marriage relation? On Mr. B.'s hypotheſis this *is not* done; on ours *fully*. If the queſtion be propoſed to him, Why ſhould the believer cohabit with the unbeliever? he muſt reply, Becauſe they were formerly married. Or rather, Not becauſe you, believer, have been devoted to your partner, and are bound to fulfil your engagement; but becauſe your infidel partner has formerly given himſelf to you. But was this a remedy ſuited to the diſeaſe? Or ſhould it be ſaid, This is a ſatisfactory conſideration why the parties ſhould continue, not merely becauſe there has been a mutual *dedication*, but becauſe there has been a divine appointment

pointment of marriage as the baſis of it. But the duty of marriage was from the beginning; yet thoſe in the time of Ezra were obliged to put off each man his wife, to which nevertheleſs he had been *wedded*. Nor is it available to ſay, That thoſe in Ezra offended againſt a *poſitive* divine law, but not theſe; for that is the very point in which they deſire ſatisfaction, viz. Whether the chriſtian law does or does not require a *ſeparation?* His anſwer is not, The law of nature is binding, and chriſtianity has nothing againſt it. This would have been his idea if *nothing more* was intended than the *validity* of marriage. But he ſays more; the unbeliever *has been* (from the moment of the partner's converſion to chriſtianity) or, by an ennalage of time, *is*, made holy or ſanctified by the believer, in virtue of a *divine grant*, which divine grant is much in favour of infants. The grant of the parent's covenant and its ſeals being always intended for them and their children, according to their capacity, be it known, as if Paul had ſaid, That tho' God hath been diſpleaſed with mixed marriages, and tho' he ſtill ſays, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers," yet the idolatry and unbelief, that is, the heatheniſm, of the one parent, ſhall be no prejudice to their children. They are not debarred from any privileges given by divine grant to other children *both* whoſe parents are chriſtians. The faith, or chriſtianity, of the one ſhall avail more

to inſure thoſe privileges, than the unbelief of the other to prevent them.

THIS is a medium of proof calculated to ſatisfy their ſcruples. To the pure, all things are pure; the unbelief of your partner ſhall not paſs over to you, as if you were involved in his unbelief and guilt; or as if the precept "touch not, taſte not, handle not," affected you. God will graciouſly deal with *you and your children* without any reference to your partner's unbelief. He ſhall ſtand or fall alone; his obſtinacy ſhall be *perſonal*, centering in himſelf; but *mercy* herein *rejoicing againſt judgment*, the promiſe is *to you*, chriſtian party, and to your children, tho' your partner oppoſe.—Nature dictates that a *father*, who is king in his own family, ſhould exerciſe his authority to the benefit of all his domeſticks; but by a *gracious expreſs appointment*, the children common to both ſhall be deemed *holy*, on account of the *mother* as well as the father, ſo as to be treated as if both parents believed. The ſeed of mixed marriages were not deemed *holy*, Ezra ix. 2. Neh. ix. 2. it might be objected. True, ſays the Apoſtle, and to anſwer your ſcruples I am authoriſed to ſay, That under *this* diſpenſation there is the difference I have mentioned; and let this quiet your minds. Your continuance together, rather than thoſe you refer to, is owing to a *ſpecial grant* in their favour, as more agreeable to this diſpenſation.

God

God does not now insist on a divorce as he did heretofore, for wise reasons, and among others, because he designs hereby *more speedily to christianize all nations.* For if the unbelief of one party were sufficient to denominate and regard their common offspring in the class of heathens rather than christians, how slow must be the progress of christianity! but now, if one believes in the Messiah, all the family is christian, and is treated accordingly. Otherwise, were not this God's plan and our practice, your children and the whole family but yourself must be deemed *unclean*, or *heathenish*, and visibly related to Satan's interest. But as an unbelieving son, daughter, or servant, is not sufficient to class the family of which either is a part among heathen families, so neither shall the unbelief of your partner, even a husband, have that influence.

AGAIN: If my opponent be right, "the epithet *unbelieving*, as BEZA well observes, would be quite superfluous, as also the *implied* epithet *believing*; *believing* wife, and *believing* husband*."

S 2 "For

* "*In uxore*, εν τη γυναικι, Vulg *Per mulierem* FIDELEM, "εν τη γυναικι πιστη: quam lectionem in Claromontano et alio "præterea manuscripto Græco codice invenimus: et rursum paulo "post εν τω ανδρω πιστω, *per virum fidelem.*—AUGUSTINUS l. i. "quo exponit sermonem in monte habitum, legit, *In fratre fideli*, "εν αδελφω τω πιστω. Vetus autem interpres habet, *Per mulie-*"*rem fidelem*, et, *per virum fidelem*; et nos in uno VETUSTO "CODICE reperimus ad marginem annotatum πιστη priore loco, "et

" For we ſhould conſider, what is the ſubject " matter in diſpute; namely, Whether matri- " mony contracted between two perſons, one an " infidel and the other a believer, is holy, and " for that cauſe the believer is bound to con- " tinue in it? Were it not ſo, why ſhould Paul, " in the other member, add the epithet *unbe-* " *lieving?* Nor can any one truly ſay, that the " marriage between two infidels is *holy*, and that " their *children* are *holy*.—I grant that the mar- " riage of infidels is valid in a civil ſenſe, nor " is their matrimonial commerce to be re- " garded *coram Deo pro ſcortatione.* But what " has this to do with Paul's deſign, who treats " of a caſe of conſcience, or a religious ſcru- " ple†?" The *unbelieving* huſband is ſanctified by the *believing* wife, and *vice verſa.* Whereas, if Mr. B.'s hypotheſis be true, the *ſanctification* was neither *by* nor *to* the believer, as a *believer*, but was poſſeſſed of it while an infidel. But if the *ſanctification* does not reſpect the party *as believing*, it ſeems inſerted for no other uſe than to miſlead us. If the apoſtle only meant ſimply, " you have been *married*," or, " you have been *devoted* to each other by marriage," why introduce and *interchange* the expreſſions and ideas—" the *unbelieving* by the *believing* party?" Mr.

" et πιςῳ poſteriore. Claromontanus autem codex habet, ιν ανδρι " αδελφω, *In viro fratre*, id eſt, qui ſit frater ſive fidelis. Et " *certe* etiamſi hæc epitheta non addas, tamen NECESSARIO *ſubau-* " *dienda ſunt.* BEZA *in loc.*

† BEZA *ut ſupra.*

Mr. B. seems to be aware of this objection, and observes: "The *unbeliever only* could entertain a doubt, concerning the *lawfulness* of cohabiting with an unbeliever." Very well; but the question still returns, If the apostle meant, as our author would have it, That the unconcerned party was *married* to the *scrupulous*; is it not reasonable to suppose, that the idea would be *differently* expressed? Is it not confessedly an *unprecedented mode* of expressing a *common idea?* Whereas, if he intended to shew —that the christianity of the one party was more prevalent, in virtue of the more merciful and extensive grant of God, and the genius of the gospel dispensation, towards classing the children among the christians; than the *infidelity* of the other party towards the classing them among *idolaters*—what expressions could he use better adapted to express the sentiment?

MOREOVER: be it observed, that the very existence of the other opinion depends on rendering the preposition ἐν, TO, which rendering ought not to be adopted without manifest necessity, if on any consideration whatever, in that sense of *to*, which denotes a *dative* case. It is well known that the most common acceptations of ἐν are *in*, *by*, *among*, *with*, and sometimes it is used for, *because of*, *for*, or *for the sake of*, *by reason of*; and the like‖." EN imports

S 3

‖ "Ἐν τῇ γυναικί, *by the wife, Uxoris gratia*, BECAUSE OF the "wife; i. e. he is to be reputed as sanctified, because he is one "flesh

" imports the *ſtate* and *diſpoſition*, the *abode* and " *ſituation*; *habitum et ſitum*, ſays VERGARA; " correſponding to the Latin *in**." And " it commonly marks the term of reſt, or the ſtate in which a thing is; wherefore it *only* governs an *ablative*†." But what has Mr. B. to ſay in vindication of his rendering? " The unbe- " lieving huſband is ſanctified TO the wife.— " *So* Dr. DODDRIDGE and others render the par- " ticle εν; and I think more properly in *this* " paſſage than in our common verſion. *So* the " prepoſition is tranſlated in the very next verſe; " as alſo in Luke i. 17. 1 Theſſ. iv. 7. and ſix " or ſeven times over in 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7‡." But *why* is the rendering *to*, more proper in *this* paſſage than in our common verſion? This anſwer we have ſtill to learn. We hear a language ſomewhat different whenever it is found in connection with *water*, and eſpecially a *river*. Thus, we may be ſure, were we to meet with εν πολεμω, in connection with baptiſm, it would be IN, and not *at* or *by* the *river*. However, let us a little more narrowly inſpect

" fleſh with her who is holy. So *Iſrael ſerved* εν γυναικί, *for* " *a wife, and,* εν γυναικε, *for a wife* he kept ſheep. Hoſ. xii. 12. " *I deſire that you faint not,* εν ταις θλιψεσι μου, BY REASON OF " *my tribulations*, Eph. iii. 13, and, *that no man be ſhaken* εν ταις " θλιψεσι ταυταις, BY REASON OF *my tribulations*. See NALDIUS " in the 23d ſignification of the particle *Beth*." WHITBY *in loc.*

* *Meſſieurs* DE PORT ROYAL'S New Method. p. 195.

† Ibid. p. 334. and their *Greek Primitives*, by NUGENT, p. 297.

‡ Pœdob. Exam. p. 395.

inspect the authorities produced, and I am very much mistaken if *any one* of these instances answer the purpose for which they are adduced: for if they do not answer the idea of a *dative*, which implies that something is GIVEN TO the object, they are useless. And I believe the best Criticks and masters of the Greek language unanimously maintain, that the preposition εν never conveys that idea §." The *dative* case is so called, "quia per eum alicui aliquid nos "dare demonstramus †." This the particle in question *never* signifies, any more than the latin *in*; and yet without that use of it Mr. B.'s interpretation is a baseless fabrick.

WE are referred to "the very next verse" following the controverted text (1 Cor. vii. 15.) *God hath called us*, εν ειρηνη, TO *peace*, according to our version; whereas Dr. HAMMOND justly

 observes,

§ "Εν τη γυναικί, *by* or *thro'* the wife. This the preposition, "εν, so ordinarily signifies, that it cannot need to be further testified "(and in this notion it is, that we here take it); whereas the "notion, which by oppofers is here affixt to it, that it should "signify *to* (that *to*, which is a sign of the *dative* case)—is "never once found to belong to it in the New Testament; nor "*can* with any tolerable *congruity* or *grammatical analogy*, be affixt "to it. All the places that are produced for this sense are commonly mistaken—And so still the rendering it *to the wife* [in "the *dative* sense] will be without any one example, and the "turning it into quite *another* phrase, as if it were γυναικί without εν; which to do without any *necessity* or *reason*, save only "—to serve the oppofer's turn upon the place, and support his "false opinion, must needs be very unreasonable." HAMMOND's Six Quer. Q. 2. iv. § 32.

† LITTLETON, sub voce *dativus*.

obſerves, " It is not *to* as the note of a *dative* " caſe, but UNTO *peace*, as εν is taken for εἰς‡." Again we are referred to Luke i. 17. *To turn — the diſobedient* TO *the wiſdom of the juſt.* But this is by no means the ſign of a *dative.* There is nothing *given to* wiſdom. " ELSNER would render it, as Dr. DODDRIDGE obſerves, BY *the wiſdom of the juſt**." And thus Sir NORTON KNATCHBULL: " *Et infideles inſtruat* IN *ſcientia juſtorum*‖." And ſo other literal verſions; " IN *prudentiam juſtorum*§." " AD *ſcientiam rectorum*§§." " AD *ſcientiam juſtorum*‡‡." " AD *prudentiam juſtorum***." " *Ad intelligentiam juſtorum*‖‖," &c. In like manner, 1 Theſſ. iv. 7. For God hath not called us unto (επὶ) uncleanneſs, but εν αγιασμῳ, UNTO *holineſs.* That is, in the phraſe of Dr. DODDRIDGE, " to the love and practice of univerſal holineſs." But what has this to do with *giving to* a recipient? As to 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. it ſeems ſtill leſs to his purpoſe. *Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge,* &c. επιχορηγησατε εν τῃ πίσει ὑμων την ἀρετὴν, εν δὲ τῃ ἀρετῃ την γνωσιν, &c. i. e. bring forward, *with* your faith, virtue, and, *with* virtue, knowledge. " The word επι- " χορηγησαλε properly ſignifies to *lead up*, as in " a dance, one of theſe virtues after another in " a beautiful and majeſtic order†." " Reſpexiſſe " videtur

‡ Dr. HAMMOND *ut ſupra.* * Fam. Expoſ. *in loc.* ‖ Animadver. *in loc.* § MONTAN. §§ SYR. INTERPRET. ‡‡ ARAB. INTERPRET. ** Vulg. ‖‖ ÆTHIOP. INTERPRET. † DODDR. Fam. Expoſ. *in loc.*

" videtur Apostolus ad antiquum morem ducendi " *choros*; vox enim επιχορηγειν proprie significat " *chorum ducere* †." Accordingly the same Author renders the passage, " Jungite invicem *cum* " fide virtutem, *cum* virtute scientiam, &c." I repeat the question, What has this to do with *giving to* a recipient? Or what similarity has it to Mr. B.'s *dative* sense?—Who knows not that the article *to* has *various* acceptations, beside what Mr. B. would force upon it? For instance, we say, *appointing to* an office, *going to* a place, *calling to* enjoy, *turning to* wisdom, &c. yet such an acceptation of the particle *to* will not serve him.

NOR will Dr. DODDRIDGE'S version answer his purpose in sense, tho' in sound. For tho' he renders ηγιασαι ει *sanctified to*, yet the particle has not the *dative* signification. He evidently gives the original particle the acceptation of the Greek εις or Latin *in*, signifying *towards*, *in respect of*, *for*, &c. It is but fair the Doctor should explain himself: " *For* in such a case as " this, *the unbelieving husband is* so *sanctified to* " the wife [*in uxorem*], *and the unbelieving wife* " *is* so *sanctified to the husband* [*in maritem*], that " their matrimonial converse is as lawful AS IF " THEY WERE BOTH OF THE SAME FAITH: " *Otherwise their children* in these mixed cases " *were unclean*, and must be looked upon, as " unfit to be admitted to those peculiar ordi- " nances, by which the seed of God's people " are distinguished; *but now they are* confessedly

† Sir NORTON KNATCHBULL, *ut supra*.

" *holy*, and are as readily admitted to baptiſm " in all our churches, as if BOTH the parents " were chriſtians: So that the caſe you ſee, " is in effect decided by this prevailing prac- " tice*." In a *note* the Doctor oppoſes the idea of legitimacy; by ſhewing " that the argument will by no means bear it." But is it not ſurprizing that perſons of diſcernment, that Mr. BOOTH in particular, ſhould ſuppoſe this rendering, *ſanctified to*, gives the leaſt countenance to his *dative* notion? Is this any thing better than a play upon the various acceptations of an engliſh particle? Is it not taking, or attempting to take, an advantage of ſound againſt ſenſe? And is it not ſtill more ſurprizing that Dr. S. ſhould expreſs himſelf thus: " Indeed " Dr. DODDRIDGE, to whoſe character for learn- " ing, candour, and piety I pay great deference, " has ſo expreſſed himſelf in his *paraphraſe* on " this paſſage, as *very naturally to convey this* " *idea* [of legitimacy], tho' in his note he op- " poſes the ſentiment. How to reconcile him " with himſelf I am at a loſs†."—*The paraphraſe very naturally conveys this idea.* And I am quite at a loſs to know, by what medium the Dr. views it. Whereas it appears to me " very naturally to convey the *contrary* idea." Does it not evidently reſolve the *lawfulneſs* of matrimonial converſe, in ſuch a mixed caſe, to a *divine grant*, declaration and appointment, that is, to the party's being *ſo ſanctified*, in virtue of a gra-

* Fam. Expoſ. *in loc.* † Anſwer to Dr. A. p. 83.

a gracious privilege conferred under the gospel, *as if they were both of the* SAME FAITH? And does not this clearly imply, that what *sanctified* the unbeliever was (not his *giving* himself *to* the other in marriage, but) God's favourable *appointment* in such a case? Had they been of the *same faith*, no scruple could have existed; the PRIVILEGE therefore consists in the *opposing* party's being *so sanctified* for the use of the other, *as if both believed* alike; otherwise, their having "mutually *given up*, or *set apart* themselves one to another," would have been no security against a *divorce*, which was the point in question, if the Lord were equally strict against infidel and idolatrous connections under the present, as he was under the preceding œconomy (*Deut.* vii. 3, 4, &c.): and the PRIVILEGE moreover is expressly extended to the *children*; which would have been reckoned (according to Ezra ix. 2. Nehem. ix. 2.) not among the relatively *holy* seed, in such a mixed case. Such a grant of special privileges, therefore, the text and the paraphrase imply; and *nothing short* of this could tend to satisfy the scrupulous querist.

BUT tho' Dr. DODDRIDGE appears to me perfectly consistent with himself, while he opposes the idea of *legitimacy*; yet I cannot help thinking but he is more reserved than he had need to be, if he had meant to confine the *sanctification* to the matrimonial converse. For, tho' we

ſhould allow that the *ſanctification* of the unbelieving partner and of the children is *the ſame*; and that the terms *ſanctified* and *holy* imply a qualification, as far as a divine grant can qualify, or a declarative permiſſion and liberty, "to partake of the diſtinguiſhing rites of God's people;" yet, as before ſhewn, the *oppoſer* of the goſpel ſhould not be *forced*; for violent meaſures are no weapons of the goſpel, and ſhould not be employed in its propagation, or in adminiſtering its initiatory ſeal. To which we may add, that ſuch an oppoſing infidel or idolater, being an *avowed enemy* to the head of the church, does not poſſeſs a ſubjective *ſuitableneſs* to enter upon a viſible relation to him and his ſubjects. He may, therefore, poſſeſs a *right*, in virtue of his relative ſanctification or holineſs, a right founded on a divine grant, and yet no miniſter has a right, or lawful authority, to *impoſe* upon him what he *rejects*, however beneficial it might be to him if accepted. But this is only a *circumſtance*, that takes its riſe ſolely in adults from the perverſe exerciſe of human liberty, the ſacred rights of conſcience in religious matters, and a ſubjective unſuitableneſs to anſwer the deſign of the ordinance. The *ſanctified* unbeliever is *entitled* to the covenant and its ſeal, unconditionally; which *title* he derives, independent of his choice, from his relation to his chriſtian partner, and as the Gift of God: but the actual *application* of the external privilege miniſterially, is ſuſpended on a *condition*, viz.

viz. his accepting of it in a manner ſuitable to his condition and circumſtances.—On the contrary, ſuppoſing the children to be *holy* only in the ſame ſenſe, ſtill the rule holds, that infant ones ought to be baptized; becauſe they are capable ſubjects, and have not forfeited the grant, nor failed in any *condition* required of them.

It may not be improper to remark, that, notwithſtanding we have, for argument' ſake, admitted Mr. B.'s idea of *fameneſs* in having been *ſanctified* and being *holy*, there ſeems to be a *difference:* As if the Apoſtle intended to ſhew, that the unbelieving partner was ſanctified, not *merely* for his own ſake, but as alſo having a *further* influence on the children, and without which they would have been *unclean*. The influence of the unbelief and heatheniſm of the one party, as if he had ſaid, is annihilated, by the counter influence of the other party's faith or chriſtianity, with reſpect to their offspring. The faith of the one party, by the merciful tenour of the goſpel diſpenſation, is more efficacious towards claſſing the children among the chriſtians, than the unbelief of the other towards claſſing them among heathens. The unbeliever is *ſanctified*, i. e. his profeſſed unbelief is *overpowered by the profeſſed holineſs* of the other, in reference to their reſpective influence upon their children, which were to be ranked either among heathens or chriſtians. But as to the *children*, their holineſs appears in ſtronger and more expreſſive terms, alluding, it ſhould ſeem, to a well known *fact* that they were

were treated as *holy*; were deemed members of the chriſtian church, and made partakers of its privileges according to their capacity. (Επει αρα,) *Otherwiſe* were your children unclean, (νυν δε) *but now* are they holy. "Nam particula νῦν hoc "in loco, ſays BEZA, non eſt temporis adver- "bium, ſed eſt conjunctio quæ adhiberi ſolet in "argumentorum aſſumptionibus, ut alibi oſtendi- "mus*." Therefore the phraſe νῦν δε αγια εστιν, is tantamount to, "*ſancti ſunt autem.*"

THUS we ſee that the interpretation for which Mr. B. contends, is in every view indefenſible. It directly tends to make the apoſtle Paul, with all his ſuperior abilities and ſupernatural endowments,—an unſkilful caſuiſt, a very abſtruſe, if not an inconcluſive, reaſoner, and a blunderer in

* Annot. *in loc.*—The following expoſition of this part of the text, and the reflections, by a maſterly critick, are worthy of inſertion here.—"Επει ἄρα—*Alioquin* [niſi parentum alteruter eſſet fidelis] "*liberi veſtri eſſent immundi*, i. e. manerent Ethnici: νῦν δε, *nunc* "*vero* [quoniam parentum alter eſt fidelis] ἁγία ἐστιν, *ſancti* "*ſunt*, i. e. reputantur membra Eccleſiæ Chriſtianæ. Et in hac "notione credo Apoſtolum ſæpius uſurpare vocem ἅγιος, ut in "initio hujus epiſtolæ, &c Eccleſia enim et ſancti ſunt ſæpius apud "Apoſtolum Synonyma, ut apparet etiam alibi, manifeſtiſſime vero "2 Cor. i 1, &c.—Non quod omnes, qui eſſent in Eccleſia Corinthi "vel Epheſi, erant revera ſancti, ſed quia membra erant viſibilia eccle- "ſiæ, ideo vocabantur *ſancti*, & ob eam cauſam liberi eorum ex alte- "rutro parente fideli, qui fuit vocatus ſanctus, participes facti "ſunt BAPTISMI, quamodo filius proſelytæ factus eſt particeps "circumciſionis, etiam infans octiduanus. Et ſi liberi eorum qui "vocantur *ſancti*, cum ſint etiam ipſi *ſancti*, non capaces ſint "baptiſmi, in quo præcellunt *ſancti* immundos? quid inde habent "commodi, eo quod vocentur vel reputentur *ſancti*?" Animadv. *in loc.* a NORTON KNATCHBULL.

in the language in which he wrote. Whereas ours regards him, as indeed he was, a skilful casuist, a masterly reasoner, and a good writer.

But we must not quit this subject without attending for a few moments to Dr. S.'s compromising plan. Having discarded the intention of personal internal holiness, legitimacy, &c. from the text, he observes: "If Mr. A. will but give "up his general proposition [that the children of "pious parents are included with them in the "christian covenant] in those exceptionable sen- "ses of it to which I have all along objected, "we shall perhaps be able to *compromise* the "matter upon this text without much diffi- "culty. I agree then, that there is a sense in "which every good man may be said to SANC- "TIFY *his wife and his children.* He DEVOTES "them by faith and prayer to God, he *sepa-* "*rates* them, as far as his influence reaches, "to the fear and service of heaven.—Thus "Job is said to have *sanctified* his children, ch. "i. 5‡." But instead of *compromising* the matter, the Dr. seems to me to *give up* the point. And one would think he is apprehensive of it himself; for, after having endeavoured to support his notion by a full paraphrase, he observes: "This paraphrase may perhaps not satisfy, nor "do I lay any great stress upon it*." But seeing this notion is hardly expected to give satisfaction, he flies to the *dernier* resort of Anti-pœdobaptists, I mean, their peculiar notion about *positive*

‡ Anf. to Dr. A. p. 87. * *Ut supra*, p. 89.

poſitive inſtitutions: "Could it be proved that "the children of chriſtian parents are included "with them in the chriſtian covenant, and on "that account *holy:* it would not follow that "therefore they ſhould be baptized: their right "to baptiſm muſt depend, and depend alone, "upon the direct expreſs command of the In- "ſtitutor; for it is *abſurd* to talk of *analogy* "and *conſequence* in the matter of poſitive in- "ſtitution†." And yet *this* fort is untenable; yes, I am bold to affirm, it is a vain and uſeleſs refuge in the preſent cauſe. (See Chap. i.) If the reaſoning contained in the preceding pages be juſt, I ſay it again, "Inſtead of compromiſing the matter, the point is *given up*." For, if every good man, as prieſt in his own houſe, may SANCTIFY *his wife and children*, may DEVOTE them *by faith* and prayer to God, and SEPARATE them to the fear and ſervice of heaven; if thoſe who are thus treated may be termed *holy*, and are ſo termed by the apoſtle, as the Dr. ſuppoſes—the very nature of the caſe ſhews, that the *holineſs* ſpoken of is *relative*; and the nature and deſign of chriſtian baptiſm ſhew, that he may with *equal* propriety, *ſet apart* all of them, *as* HIS, for that ordinance; and it appears from what has been ſaid, that none in ſuch a family ſhould be left unbaptized, except thoſe who *reject* the counſel of God, or are manifeſtly *diſaffected* to the chriſtian church and its divine Founder.

§ 55. FROM

† Ibid.

§ 55. FROM what has been ſaid in this chapter we may draw the following obvious corollaries.

1. *Coroll.* Thoſe *principles* whereby infant children are debarred from their parents' privileges, from a viſible ſtanding in the church of Chriſt, and particularly from baptiſm, which is itſelf a privilege, and the only introductory rite to that viſible ſtanding among God's people, are *unreaſonable*, *unſcriptural*, and highly *uncharitable*.

(1) *Unreaſonable*—becauſe "infants are *capable* of the OBLIGATIONS of baptiſm; for the *obligation* ariſeth from the EQUITY *of the thing*, not from the underſtanding and capacity of the perſon*." And "if we conſider baptiſm as an ordinance of *dedication*—it is the indiſpenſible duty of believers to devote themſelves, and *all they have*, to God; which is *founded in the law of nature*, and is the reſult of God's right to us *and ours*." And if it be objected: "Since infants cannot *devote themſelves* to God in this ordinance, therefore it is not to be applied to them; to this it may be replied, That as there is no other *medium* which can be made uſe of to prove that the ſolemn act of conſecration, or dedication to God in baptiſm, is to be made *only* by ourſelves, but what is taken from a ſuppoſition of the matter in controverſy, by thoſe who aſſert that infants are not to be baptized: ſo if this method of reaſoning be allowed of, we might as well ſay, on the other hand

* POOLE's Annot. on Matt. xxviii. 19.

hand; Infants are to be baptized; therefore baptiſm is not an ordinance of ſelf dedication, ſince they cannot devote themſelves to God; and that would militate againſt what is allowed of by all, that baptiſm, when applied to the adult, is an ordinance of ſelf-dedication.—When I do, as it were, paſs over my right to another, there is nothing required in order hereunto, but that I can lawfully do it, conſidering it as *my property*; and this is no leſs to be doubted concerning the *infant ſeed* of believers than I can queſtion, whether an adult perſon has a right to *himſelf* when he gives up himſelf to God in this ordinance.—And from hence it may be inferred—that infants deſcending from parents, either both, or but one of them profeſſing faith in Chriſt, are to be baptized: ſince *one* parent has as much a right to the child as the *other**." To theſe reflections of the judicious Dr. RIDGLEY, I will add the following from the juſtly celebrated Dr. OWEN: "All children in their infancy are reckoned unto the covenant of their parents, by virtue of *the law of their creation.*—Thoſe who by God's appointment, and by virtue of the law of their creation, are and *muſt of neceſſity* be included in the covenant of their parents, have the ſame right with them unto the privileges of that covenant, no *expreſs exception* being put in againſt them. This right it is in the power of none to deprive them of, *unleſs they can change the*

* RIDGLEY's Body of Div. vol. ii. p. 408, 409.

the law of their creation †." To attempt which, it is hardly neceſſary to remark, that it is ſufficiently *unreaſonable*.

(2) *Unſcriptural.* In addition to what has been ſaid on the various diſpenſations of the covenant of grace, or the grant of mercy to men; the declarations of prophecy; and the records of the New Teſtament; let the following remarks from the author laſt referred to, be impartially weighed. "Believers under the New Teſtament, have loſt nothing, no privilege that was enjoyed by them under the old. Many things they have *gained*, and thoſe of unſpeakable excellency, but they have loſt nothing at all. Whatever they had of *privilege* in any ordinance, that is continued; and whatever was of *burden* or bondage, that is taken away: all that they had of old was on this account, that they were the *people of God*. — Into this great *fountain privilege* believers under the goſpel have now ſucceeded. — This I ſuppoſe is unqueſtionable; that God making them to be *his people* who were *not a people*, would not cut them ſhort of any privilege which belonged before to *his people* as ſuch. — Let men but give *one inſtance* to this purpoſe, and not beg the matter in queſtion, and it ſhall ſuffice. — And is it poſſible that any man ſhould be a loſer by the *coming of Chriſt*, or by his *own coming* unto Chriſt? It is againſt the whole goſpel once to imagine it in the leaſt inſtance. Let it now be inquired, whether it were not a great

† Tract of Inf. Bapt. ap. Collect. of Serm. p. 577.

great *privilege* of the *people of God* of old, that their *infant ſeed* were taken into covenant with them, and were made partakers of the *initial ſeal* thereof? Doubtleſs it was the greateſt they enjoyed, next to the grace they received for the ſaving of their own ſouls.—Without this, whatever they were, they were not *a people*. Believers * under the goſpel are, as we have ſpoken, the *people of God*; and that with all ſorts of advantages annexed unto that condition, above what were enjoyed by them who of old were ſo. How is it then that this *people of God*, made ſo by Jeſus Chriſt in the goſpel, ſhould have their *charter* upon its *renewal razed* with a deprivation of one of their choiceſt rights and privileges? Aſſuredly it is not ſo. And therefore, if believers are now, as the apoſtle ſays they are, the *people of God* (Heb. iv. 9.) their children have a right to the *initial ſeal* of the covenant †."

(3) *Uncharitable.* Is it not uncharitable (to ſay nothing worſe) to conclude, that all the infants in the chriſtian world are as unqualified for a viſible memberſhip in the church of God, as the moſt hardened infidel? Nay, much further from the goſpel kingdom; ſince the latter *may* come to be a member in a few days, while the former *muſt*, on this plan, be ſhut out for years; and this excluſion muſt continue for ever, if

* UNDERSTAND by *Believers* and the *people of God*, CHRISTIANS; that is, thoſe who are ſuch by *denomination*; which remarks are ſtill more forcible with reſpect to the truly pious.

† Dr. OWEN, On the Hebr. vol. ii. p. 256.

if the party do not *submit* to such terms of communion, as nine godly persons out of ten judge and sincerely believe are *unreasonable* and *unscriptural*, viz. a *renunciation* of the baptism and church-membership of infants, and of every mode of receiving and administering the ordinance, except a total immersion of the body. Our opponents, indeed, extend their charity as far as we could wish, to *dying* infants, while they are so sparing of it to the *living*. The dying are numbered with the *saints*, the living, as to church relation and privileges, are classed with *infidels*. And is it not strange to astonishment, that the *excellency* and *spirituality* of the gospel dispensation should be considered as an argument by men of sense, for excluding infants from a visible relation to Christ and his people! But if this be a just plea of exclusion, why so freely allow them a standing in a state far *more* excellent and spiritual? How can these things hang together? Does it not involve an *absurdity*, as well as uncharitableness, to say, that a person may be very well admitted to heaven, *without* believing and repenting, but not to be a member of the visible church? The church, it is allowed, is the common nursery from whence paradise is planted; and yet infants must not be taken into this nursery, but heaven must have them from the wild waste!—Dr. JOHN OWEN was a man whom no modest person would venture to pronounce either a shallow divine or a superficial reasoner; he was a person much conversant with the controversial parts of divinity

nity, eminently verſed in the *rationale* of the divine diſpenſations, well acquainted with the nature of poſitive inſtitutions in general; and the ſubjects and mode of baptiſm in particular, poſſeſſed a ſhare of his inveſtigations. Thus qualified to inſtruct us, let us hear his words: "Why is it the will of God, that *unbelievers* "and *impenitent* ſinners ſhould not be baptized? "It is becauſe, not granting them the *grace*, he "will not grant them the *ſign*. If therefore "God *denies* the *ſign* to the infant ſeed of be- "lievers, it muſt be *becauſe* he denies them the "grace of it; and then *all* the children of be- "lieving parents, dying in their infancy, muſt "without hope be eternally damned. I do not "ſay, that all muſt be ſo, who *are not* baptized; "but *all muſt be ſo whom God* WOULD HAVE "NOT BAPTIZED *." Infants being not *naturally incapable* of baptiſm, as before ſhewn, any more than of circumciſion, and ſcripture evidence affording no expreſs exception againſt them, but on the contrary contains much in their favour as members of the chriſtian church, and their right to baptiſm, may we not aſk, if Dr. OWEN's reaſoning be juſt (and we may ſafely challenge the whole *corps* of Antipædobaptiſts to refute it) muſt not *our denying* baptiſm to our infant children be a conduct towards them highly *uncharitable*, as well as unſcriptural and unreaſonable? We impeach not the tenderneſs and affection of our brethren to their children in *other* reſpects, and readily ſuppoſe that there is a ſenſe in

* Dr. OWEN of Inf. Bapt. *ut ſupra.*

in which every *good man* among them " *devotes* them (as Dr. STENNETT expreſſes it) by faith [tho' in this reſpect *weak*] and prayer to God —*ſeparates* them as far as his influence reaches [*except* in the caſe of church-memberſhip and baptiſm] to the fear and ſervice of heaven, and they derive from their connection with him ſuch external advantages of a religious kind [tho' in an *irregular* way, if it be irregular to ſeparate what God hath joined, the *charter* and the *ſeal*; and to tear away the ſtamp and ſignature of the only charter whereby they enjoy thoſe external advantages] as often prove the happy means of their converſion and ſalvation †." The *uncharitableneſs* we are ſpeaking of conſiſts, not in reſtraining prayer before God for them, or in neglecting moral parental duties (except what ariſes naturally and neceſſarily from their diſtinguiſhing tenet); but in acting the part of the diſciples over again, who *forbad* infants and children to be brought to Chriſt in all the *external ways* they are capable of being brought.

2. *Coroll.* From what has been ſaid it may evidently appear, what that *church memberſhip* is which we claim for infants, and what thoſe different *relations* are in which they ſtand to Chriſt and his people before and after baptiſm. The term itſelf, *church-memberſhip*, being expreſſive of relation and compariſon, admits of different *degrees*; ſo that the ſame perſon may be a church-member in one ſenſe, but not in another. The goſpel church is a ſelect body of people of which Chriſt

† Anſ. to Dr. A. p. 87.

Chriſt is the head, and each perſon of which it is compoſed is a member. But this body may be *ſelect* in a manner leſs or more ſtrict; and conſequently the *relation* of the members to the head and to each other muſt be proportionally remote or intimate. Accordingly we may obſerve,

(1) That perſons are often called *church-members* in this controverſy, when they are ſo only *de jure*, or *quoad debitum*. And in this ſenſe we regard all adults *before* baptiſm, who nevertheleſs *may* be lawfully baptized. The infant children of profeſſing chriſtians, thoſe of our opponents not excepted, we alſo regard as church-members in the ſame ſenſe, tho' not baptized. And we cannot but conſider this circumſtance with pleaſure and gratitude, on behalf of children, that there is *one degree* of church-memberſhip, that which is *quoad debitum*, which it is out of the power of men to deprive them of. The propriety of their being denominated *members* of the church, antecedent to their being miniſterially recognized ſuch, ariſes hence, That they actually poſſeſs the qualifications of members, and therefore *are ſo* in the *divine eſtimation*, and *ought* to be ſo in ours, tho', *quoad eventum*, they may never be baptized, thro' the miſtakes and faults of others. This relation to Chriſt is appointed and determined by himſelf, and ſtands abſolutely independent on the will of others.

(2) Persons are called *church-members* in a *ſtricter* ſenſe, when they have been regularly admitted

mitted by baptism, the ordinance of admission, into the number of those who are professed *christians*, in contradistinction to Jews, Heathens, &c. And it is evident from the nature of the case, that *this* degree of membership depends on the will and ministry of man, *quoad eventum*. The *right* of membership, being a divine gift, must needs be *absolute*; but the publick avowal and recognition of that right by an ordinance instituted for that purpose, must needs depend on the judgment, volition, and agency of men. If any abuse this discretionary trust, they are accountable to the Judge of all; nevertheless, with regard to the validity of *ministerial* acts, in admitting persons into *this* membership, or shutting them out, we may say, that what is bound on earth is bound in heaven, and what is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven. Therefore, the first relation is to be sought from the determination of God, but the last from the determination of man. And then alone is the latter right, when it coincides with, and is expressive of, the former. And in reference to baptism we may say, it *belongs* to the first, but *makes* the second.

(3) AGAIN: Persons are called *church-members* in the *strictest* sense, when they have consented to associate together for divine worship and christian fellowship, for promoting their mutual edification, the conversion of souls, &c. But such a body is not, strictly speaking, *the church* of Christ, but *a part* of it. Christ has

but *one* body, the church, myſtically; and but *one*, viſibly; and as to congregational churches, ſo called, they are but collective parts of that one viſible church. Or if we borrow an illuſtration from the ſtarry heaven, we may ſay, That a *particular* church is a *conſtellation* of ſtars, which makes but a ſmall *part* of the general catalogue.

But what particularly deſerves our notice is, That the *firſt* relation *entitles* to baptiſm; that the *ſecond* relation ſuppoſes the *application* of baptiſm; and the *third alone* is what infants and young children are to be debarred from. And this excluſion is no arbitrary proceeding, but reſults from the very nature and deſign of ſuch a ſociety. The only *poſitive* qualification requiſite for this laſt membership, is, that a perſon be baptized; and in that reſpect every baptized perſon may be ſaid to have a legal right to it. But again, ſeeing the nature and deſign of ſuch a ſociety, as may be gathered from nature and revelation, does not comprehend infants and children, and adults evidently diſqualified by error and wickedneſs; the one not poſſeſſing natural, the other not moral qualifications; the not admitting baptized infants to the Lord's Supper, which is *peculiar* to church-members in this ſtricteſt ſenſe, is founded on the juſteſt principles; for when laws and rights *poſitive* and *moral interfere*, the former muſt yield to the latter.

If our opponents wilfully overlook theſe plain and neceſſary diſtinctions, it is no wonder, if

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ſo diſpoſed, that they ſhould be able to repreſent the Pœdobaptiſts in an inconſiſtent and ridiculous light: for what armour is proof againſt ſuch weapons? At this rate, the ſacredneſs and dignity of truth itſelf are no defence. Mr. B. having made ſome remarks on the word "covenant" as uſed by Mr. MATTHEW HENRY (as if *that* term alſo had not *various* acceptations), adds: "The conduct of Mr. HENRY is quite "ſimilar, in regard to *church-membership*. For "in one place he tells us, that baptiſm is an "ordinance of Chriſt, *whereby* the perſon bap-"tized is *ſolemnly* ADMITTED a member of the "viſible church: yet in the ſame treatiſe, he aſ-"ſures us, that baptiſm is an ordinance of the "viſible church, and pertains therefore to thoſe "that ARE *viſible members* of the church.—Their "covenant right and their *church-membership*, in-"titleth them to baptiſm—Baptiſm doth not "*give* the title, but *recognize* it, and compleat "that church-membership which before was im-"perfect†." But does this paſſage deſerve all the ridicule Mr. B. affects to treat it with? Is there any thing here deſerving of "the ſarcaſtic reflection of a profane poet?" Mr. B.'s *ironies* in the preſent caſe, affect—not Mr. HENRY's *cauſe*, nor the *ſentiments* here advanced, but—the defect of language, or at moſt an omiſſion in *defining* terms and making diſtinctions, to prevent the cavils of thoſe who ſeek occaſion.

† Pœdob. Exam. p. 322, and Mr. *Henry*'s Treatiſe on Baptiſm, p. 25, 66, 107.

sion.—Having examined as proposed, Who are the proper *Subjects* of baptism; particularly, whether it is the WILL OF CHRIST that the infants of believing or christian parents should be baptized? we proceed to consider next the *mode* of administering the ordinance.

END OF VOL. I.